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Bangalore Mirror

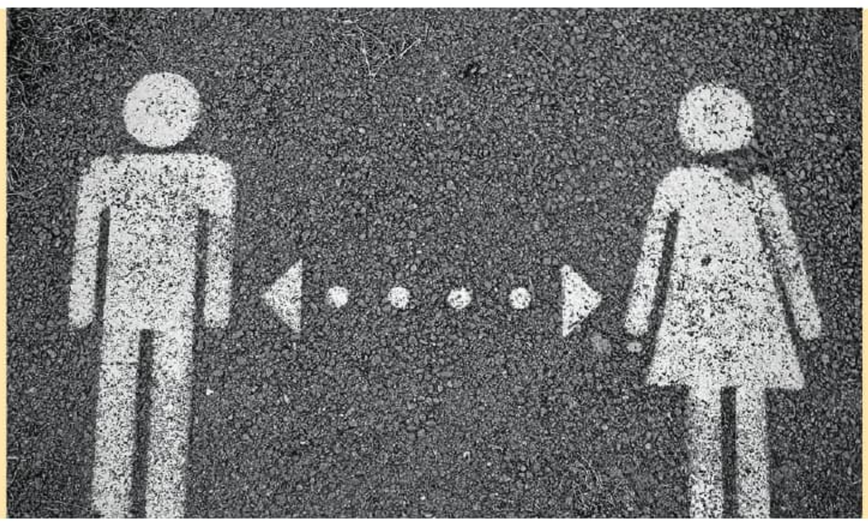
ON SATURDAY

TEMP Max 27 | Min 16 | Humidity 45% Mostly sunny Sensex 85,762 | Nifty 26,328 | Gold 1,35,766 | Silver 2,35,999 | Dollar 90.11 | Euro 105.72 | GBP 121.44

LIVELIHOOD MATTERS

New legislation dilutes rights-based nature of MGNREGA, converts it into centrally controlled scheme, warn workers

PAGE 2



GENDER BENDER

Data reveals men in K'taka dying nearly five years earlier than women; most deaths occur during middle age

PAGE 9

Tragedy at 'illegal' PG building has citizens fuming. GBA order on safety protocols has come too late, they say and ask why nothing is being done to demolish unauthorised, unsafe structures

DISASTERS WAITING TO HAPPEN

'Why did authorities act only after lives were lost, despite being aware of the illegalities?'

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Following the recent cylinder blast at a PG accommodation in Kundalahalli that claimed the life of a techie and left several others injured, residents and activists have raised sharp questions over the inaction of the Greater Bangalore Authority (GBA).

They point out that despite repeated alerts to the erstwhile BBMP about the illegal, overcrowded and unsafe nature of several PG buildings in the area, no firm action was taken. With authorities acting only after the fatal incident, residents are now demanding accountability and asking who will take responsibility for the lives lost.

Arvind Keerthi from Brookefield told BM that residents had warned authorities three years ago, during the building's construction, about the unsafe, overcrowded, and unapproved structure. "We filed a lawsuit and obtained a demolition order. We then approached the former BBMP Commissioner, Tushar Girinath, requesting him to execute the order.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 >>

"Setbacks, FSI, fire safety norms are all violated in open daylight. Buildings are getting constructed even without building plan approvals. Yet, the government fails to demolish them. This is pretty much the case all over Mahadevapura

—Sandeep Anirudhan, Citizens' Agenda for Bengaluru

Get in line

Getting to Kempge Gowda bus station is tiresome drag due to major gridlock caused by BMTC bus coming in from all directions

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

If you have ever taken a Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus towards Kempe Gowda Bus Station from Bengaluru West and North on Sundays, you will know exactly why time is of the essence in this commute. It is advisable to leave your home with at least 30 to 45 minutes to spare as there is no guarantee that the BMTC bus will take you to your destination on time. And it is not congestion due to private buses that is hampering the flow, but it is the row of BMTC buses themselves that are coming from different destinations and reaching Dhanvantri Road that connects to Kempe Gowda Bus Station that are creating a fine mess.

One can see a serpentine queue of BMTC buses on Dhanvantri Road up to the underpass. Many passengers, who want to catch a train or a KSRTC bus, are compelled to alight from the stranded BMTC buses and walk up to more than a half-km to reach either the KSRTC Bus Station or Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station. This can be particularly troublesome to women or elderly.

Many BMTC commuters, and even bus drivers and conductors, expressed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 >>

THINGS TO DO

01 Eco echoes

Tundu Bhoomi Krushika Mahila Sankranti brings to life the strength and spirit of Karnataka's women farmers, custodians of native seeds, food traditions, and sustainable living, at Ragi Kana Santhe. **Where: Ragi Kana, Gottigere; When: January 11, 10 am**

02 Theatrical escapades

Bangalore Little Theatre is presenting a stage adaptation of the 2nd-century Tamil epic following the fateful journey of Kannagi, and her transformation from wronged wife to divine avenger, becoming both a personal act of justice and a timeless legend about chastity, truth, and the devastating cost of injustice. **Where: Jagriti Theatre, Whitefield; When: February 7, 8, 3.30 pm and 7.30 pm**

03 Curtain call

Atta Galatta is presenting The Star, by Bangalore Little Theatre Foundation, which follows a heartwarming story about forgotten dreams and the magic of second chances. **Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; When: January 3, 7 pm**

04 Story time

Ranga Shankara returns with its signature intimate storytelling programme, Little Cloud, packed with an enchanting experience of creativity, laughter and imagination. The sessions are held for children aged 4 to 6 every Saturday and Sunday. **Where: Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar; When: January 3 to March 15, 10 am**

05 Magical world

Lahe Lahe Caravan is presenting 'Harry Potter Book Discussion', a meetup by Sonali Bhatia, for hard-core Potterheads aged 12 and above. The event brings a chance to enter the wizarding world and share your thoughts and insights. **Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; When: January 4, 2.30 pm**

New employment act fans flames of dissent

Citizens come together to oppose govt's plan to replace MGNREGA with new act, say move is financially unsustainable and dilutes-rights based nature of employment guarantee

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File photo of nationwide protests against replacement of MGNREGA

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) workers, civil society representatives and legal experts on Thursday strongly opposed the Union government's move to replace the MGNREGA with the proposed Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-GRAMG) Act, 2025, terming it an attack on rural workers' right to employment. Addressing a press conference organised under the banner of the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, speakers argued that the new legislation dilutes the rights-based nature of MGNREGA and converts it into a centrally-controlled, discretionary scheme. They criticised the manner in which the bill was introduced and passed, claiming it was pushed through the Parliament within 72 hours without consultations, despite impacting more than 26 crore registered workers across the country.

Activists said the existing MGNREGA framework itself is underfunded, with the Centre unable to ensure even 50 days of work per household annually. They alleged that the government's promise of providing 125 days of employment under the new law was misleading, as budgets would be capped and states would be forced to mobilise additional funds.

Several concerns were raised about the VB-GRAMG Act, including the removal of employment as a legal right, restrictions on work availability to only those rural areas notified by the Centre, and state-wise caps on employment days. Speakers also warned that the revised 60:40 cost-sharing formula would place a significant financial burden on states and undermine federal principles.

Farmer and labour groups expressed concern over a proposed 60-day blackout period during peak agricultural seasons, saying it would weaken the bargaining power of women, landless workers and marginalised communities. Participants further alleged that the move erodes grassroot democracy by reducing the role of Gram Sabhas and Panchayats, while centralising decision-making on projects and assets.

Legal experts pointed out that the removal of the Centre's liability to compensate workers for delayed wages violates earlier Supreme Court directions. Others noted that the Act relies heavily on technological controls such as biometric authentication and digital attendance, which they said had already resulted in large-scale exclusions without addressing corruption.

Economists and activists described the new law as fiscally unsustainable for states and detrimental to rural employment security.

Concluding the press conference, representatives demanded that the VB-GRAMG Act be withdrawn, MGNREGA be restored in its original form, and the constitutional right to work be protected.

Private schools flout fee disclosure norms

Despite clear instructions from the School Education Department, several private and unaided schools in the state have failed to publish their fee structure, causing growing distress among parents. Every December, schools are required to disclose the upcoming academic year's fee details as per the Right to Education Act, 2009, and upload them on the SATS portal, besides displaying them on notice boards for parents' reference. However, for the past two to three years, many schools have ignored these norms, making admissions opaque and forcing parents to commit without clarity on costs.

Parents demand transparency as schools fail to disclose fee structure ahead of academic year

Parents' associations allege that barely three to four per cent of private schools are following the rules, even though Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) and state syllabus institutions are all mandated to make fee details public. With annual fee hikes of 10 to 15 per cent becoming routine and little enforcement from authorities, parents say the burden has become unsustainable. "In the 2024 academic year, fewer than 500 schools across the state disclosed their fee structure, highlighting weak compliance. While the department maintains that steps are being taken to regulate and scientifically fix fees, parents are demanding strict action and transparency this year to curb arbitrary hikes," said Savitri Gowda, a parent. **— BMB**

Residential coaching planned for PU science students

To help government pre-university science students perform better in professional course entrance exams, the Department of Pre University Education is set to roll out free residential coaching programmes from the 2025–26 academic year. The initiative targets second year PU science students, many of whom have been attempting competitive exams in recent years but lag behind due to lack of proper guidance and structured training. Student identification has already been completed at the district level, with the department receiving an encouraging response.

An official said, "The 30-day residential coaching will begin immediately after the first final PU examination and will be conducted in one selected PU college in each district. The programme will include free food, accommodation, separate hostels for boys and girls, and study material, with training offered in Kannada and English to avoid language barriers. Daily short tests and weekend mock exams will be held, while experienced faculty and department officials will serve as resource persons." Officials believe the intensive residential model will significantly improve students' preparedness for entrance exams, with detailed guidelines expected to be announced shortly. **— BMB**

Eateries hit by commercial LPG price hike

The New Year opened with a price shock as the cost of 19 kg commercial LPG cylinders was hiked by Rs 111 from January 1, impacting hotels, restaurants, dhabas and catering units across Bengaluru. While domestic LPG prices remain unchanged, the increase in commercial cooking gas is expected to add pressure on the city's food and hospitality sector. In Bengaluru, the price of a commercial LPG cylinder now stands at Rs 1,787, after small reductions of Rs 10 in December and Rs 5 in November last year.

Sources said that oil marketing companies revise LPG prices on the first day of every month based on global benchmarks and currency movements. Domestic LPG prices had last been raised by Rs 50 in April 2025, taking the cylinder price to Rs 853, and have remained steady since. Fuel prices in Bengaluru have also stayed unchanged following a Rs 2 per litre cut in petrol and diesel in March last year. **— BMB**

Watermarked question papers to curb SSLC exam leaks

In a decisive move to plug recurring leaks, the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board will introduce watermarked question papers for the SSLC state level preparatory examinations. The board has tightened security after several instances of papers being circulated on WhatsApp despite existing safeguards. An official said, "Unlike earlier years, when schools downloaded question papers a day in advance, the papers will now be uploaded only on the morning of the exam. Each download will require an OTP sent to the registered mobile number of the school headmaster, and the question paper will carry a visible watermark linked to the school, making any leak easily traceable." **— BMB**

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PENDANTS

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Only segregated waste, strict penalties enforced

Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) has tightened solid waste management norms, making it mandatory for contractors to collect only segregated waste from households within its jurisdiction. Contractors accepting mixed waste will face stiff penalties and criminal action, including registration of FIRs, officials said.

BSWML has floated tenders in 33 packages covering 28 Assembly constituencies for door-to-door waste collection, secondary transportation and street sweeping, at an estimated cost of ₹2,544.91 crore. The tender finalisation process is currently under way. Under the revised system, contractors will be held to stricter accountability standards, including commencing door-to-door collection by 6.30 am, collecting wet and dry waste separately, and refusing to lift mixed garbage. Contractors must also submit photo and video evidence of segregation violations to BSWML.

BSWML floats tenders in 33 packages covering 28 constituencies for services costing ₹2,544.91 crore

An official said strict operational, labour and penalty clauses have been built into the contracts. Only 80% of the monthly service fee will be released, with 20% retained as a penalty buffer. Contractors must clear PF and ESI dues, pay minimum wages directly to workers' bank accounts, ensure biometric attendance, uniforms, safety gear and insurance. Violations including dumping or transport lapses will attract fines and contract cancellation.

— BMB

Just excuses, no action on APC Circle Road potholes

Commuter posts complaint on Chief Minister's Office social media looking for solution, gets explanation for delay in work instead

Delays in sewer pipeline work prolong inconvenience for APC Circle commuters

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Many motorists commuting on the road between APC Circle near Jigani and Bommasandra Road are facing severe difficulties due to its poor condition. One commuter posted a complaint on the Chief Minister's Office social media seeking a solution. However, instead of initiating action, the response provided an explanation for the delay, rather than directing authorities to commence the work.

Mani Ranjan, a commuter who posted the complaint, said he was not satisfied with the reply. "If the UGD work is still pending, my clear expectation is that the concerned officials should be directed to complete the UGD work on priority so the road work can start without further delay. I am seeking a solution, not an explanation of why the work is pending. Delays defeat the purpose of raising a grievance. I sincerely request you put pressure on the concerned UGD officials to expedite and complete the work at the earliest," he said.

Demanding immediate asphalting, Suneel Manvi, another commuter, said he got injured when his vehicle skidded due to potholes. "I fell and got injured while negotiating potholes on the road. My bike was also damaged," he added.

> **"I am seeking a solution, not an explanation of why the work is pending. Delays defeat the purpose of raising a grievance**
> – Mani Ranjan, commuter

The Public Works Department (PWD) assistant executive engineer, in a letter to the Special Officer, Chief Minister's Office, stated that the government has sanctioned Rs 9.90 crore for asphalting the road. "The Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Drainage Board (KUWSDB) engineers are expected to dig the road for laying UGD pipes. We will take up asphalting work as soon as the KUWSDB engineers complete the work," the letter read.

Documents obtained by Bangalore Mirror show that KUWSDB had written to the Assistant Executive Engineer, PWD, on June 17, 2025, seeking permission to lay UGD pipelines on the PWD Road. "As per the approved design, about 7.5 km of sewer lines are to be laid from Srirampura to APC Circle on the PWD Road.

Since the above work is taken up under the NGT and must be completed within the prescribed timeframe, you are requested to inspect the site and accord permission for laying 7.5 km of pipeline on the PWD Road. Necessary charges will be paid if any," the letter read.

Motorists continue to face hardships daily, citing safety hazards and damage to vehicles. While funds have been sanctioned and pipeline work is ongoing, commuters stress that timely completion of UGD work and subsequent asphalting are urgently needed to restore road safety and normal traffic flow.

Red line metro proposal on Centre's table

An independent committee has submitted its report on Namma Metro's proposed Red Line connecting Sarjapur and Hebbal, which the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs will now examine. The 36.59 km corridor comprises 22.14 km of elevated track and 14.45 km underground, with 28 stations planned. The Detailed Project Report estimates the cost at ₹28,405 crore, or roughly ₹1,776 crore per km, a figure that earlier prompted the Centre to seek detailed justification from Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited. The state government approved the project nearly a year ago and forwarded it for central clearance.

BMRCL officials said construction would commence after the Centre approves the DPR, adding that modifications would be incorporated if suggested. They explained the estimate was benchmarked against the under-construction Kalena Agrahara–Nagawara Pink Line, accounting for land acquisition, tunnelling, stations, systems, depots and rolling stock. Officials said shortening underground station lengths by around 40 metres could potentially reduce costs by nearly ₹3,000 crore, though such reductions may limit future capacity. If approved work on the Sarjapur–Hebbal line could begin this year, with operations by 2031.

— BMB

KAUSHIK JN

Fuming roads Road covered in smoke as garbage is burnt, in Siddaiah Road

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Uncleared mess
Konanakunte

After a new drainage line was installed, a truckload of small jelly was dumped overnight at a garden, Old Bank Colony, Konanakunte. The debris remained uncleared for over 2 weeks, severely disrupting vehicle movement and causing inconvenience for residents and commuters.

Illegal parking
Vyalikaval

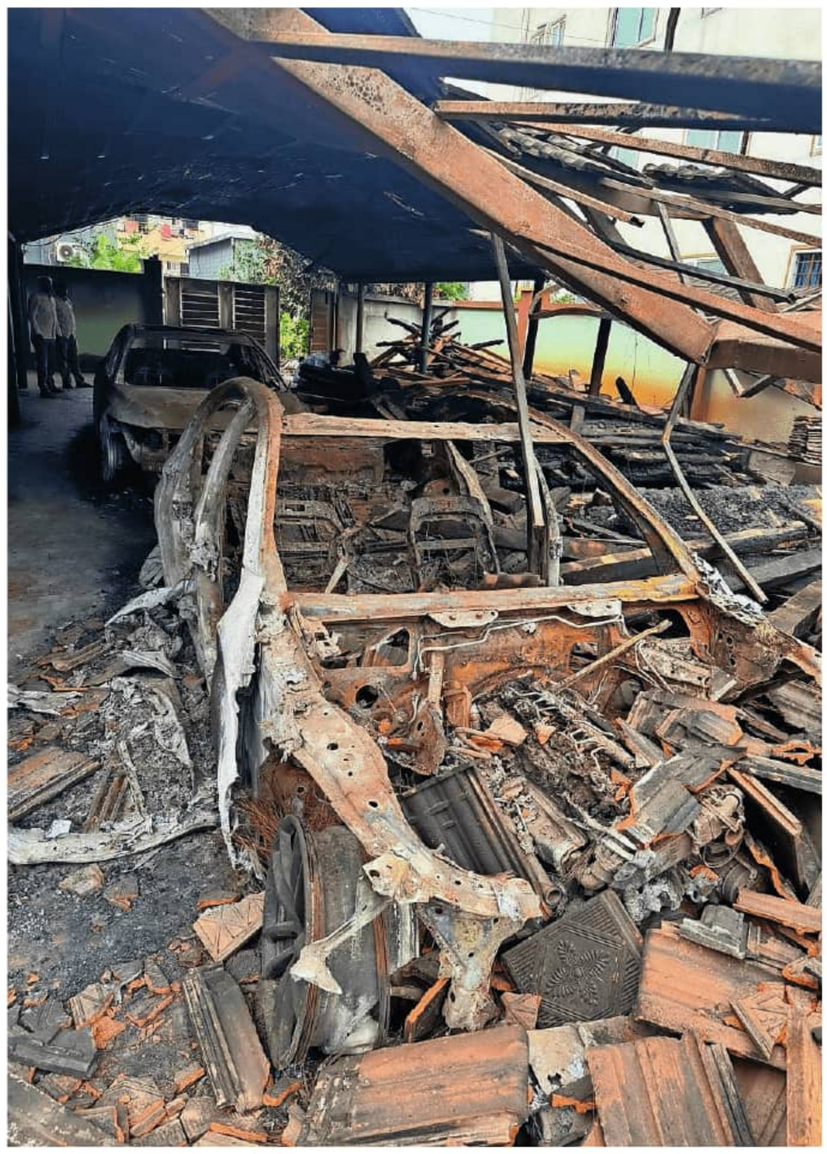
Two cars have been illegally parked on 14th Cross for six months, causing a persistent nuisance. Residents are demanding their immediate removal to restore normal traffic flow and pedestrian safety.

Street neglect
Sultanpalya

The main road in Sultanpalya has remained in poor condition for the past four months, forcing pedestrians to balance carefully while walking. Authorities are urged to carry out urgent maintenance.

Family has narrow escape from midnight inferno

Fire engulfs parked luxury vehicles outside JP Nagar home



Charred remains of luxury cars outside a JP Nagar home after pre-dawn fire, from which a family of six escaped

Six occupants fled via rear exit after flames erupted from parked sedan, triggering smoke spread, power failure and multi-crore damage before responders intervened

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A family of six had a providential escape when two cars parked in front of their house caught fire in the wee hours of Wednesday at Vanasiri Vaddarapalya in JP Nagar 8th Phase. They escaped through the rear door of the house as it was unsafe to exit through the front.

"I woke up after hearing a loud noise at around 2.30 am on December 24. When I stepped out, I found my BMW car on fire. I tried to douse the flames with water, but in vain. Meanwhile, I took my family members — my wife, son, daughter-in-law and two grandsons — to safety through the back door. I managed to get everyone out before smoke spread inside the house. By the time I returned, the BMW was completely engulfed, and the fire had spread to my second car, a Toyota Camry. Both vehicles were completely gutted. I informed the Fire and Emergency Services," said M Manjunath.

He said Fire and Emergency Services personnel arrived promptly and doused the fire, preventing it from spreading to the house. "There was a risk of the fire spreading to the house, but it was contained in time. The electric meter box caught fire and was completely damaged, and power supply is yet to be restored," he said.

Manjunath said he suffered losses estimated between ₹3 crore and ₹3.5 crore due to the incident. "I had stored timber logs for the construction of a building, and most of the timber was also burnt," he said.

Konanakunte police visited the spot, registered a fire accident report (FAR), and are investigating the case. Meanwhile, forensic experts inspected the site and collected samples to ascertain the cause of the fire. "I have informed BMW India about the incident via email. They have assured me of a response after completing an internal enquiry," he said.

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KSRTC rolls out bus dashcams

Alarmed by a series of accidents and fire incidents involving private sleeper buses, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has decided to strengthen safety measures across its fleet. KSRTC plans to install dashboard cameras in sleeper buses to closely monitor drivers' driving patterns and behaviour, especially on highways and during night travel. The move aims to prevent accidents by ensuring better supervision and timely corrective guidance. Cameras will be fitted in both AC and non-AC sleeper buses, including Pallakki, Corona, Airavat Club Class Seater, Ambari Utsav and Ambari Dream Class services.

An official said, "The transport corporation is also working to ensure that all buses are equipped with first-aid boxes and fire-fighting equipment, while emergency exits will be properly maintained. Panic buttons and glass-breaking hammers near emergency doors will be kept in working condition, and passengers will be given clear instructions on safety protocols to follow during emergencies." KSRTC officials said luxury Pallakki and Ambari buses are already fitted with Fire Detection and Suppression System technology, which provides early alerts in the event of a fire, helping to prevent major mishaps and improve passenger safety. **–BMB**

Social media trolls arrested finally

Police have arrested two individuals, including an auto-rickshaw driver and a software engineer, for allegedly posting obscene and derogatory comments on social media against Vijayalakshmi, wife of actor Darshan.

According to the police, the action followed a complaint filed on December 24, 2025, by Vijayalakshmi, a resident of Hosakerehalli. In her complaint, she alleged that more than 18 individuals had been posting obscene and defamatory posts, comments and messages against her and her family on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. She sought strict legal action against those responsible.

Based on the complaint, a case was registered and a detailed investigation was launched. During the probe, Cyber Crime Police Station officers traced several accounts involved in circulating the offensive content. Two accused were identified and secured.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Chandrashekar B (45), son of Sarabai, an auto-rickshaw driver residing in Chikkabanavara, and Nithin (31), son of Basavarajappa, a software engineer from Davanagere.

Police said both accused had allegedly posted obscene messages and comments targeting the complainant and her family. They have been secured for questioning, and further investigation is under way. Efforts are on to identify and trace the remaining accused involved in the case. **–BMB**

CRIME FILES

Police take fatal stabbing suspects into custody

A 36-year-old auto-rickshaw driver was allegedly stabbed to death following a dispute over a trivial issue in Bhuvaneshwari Nagar, within the KP Agrahara police station limits. An investigation led to the arrest of three accused in connection with the murder.

According to the police, the deceased's cousin, Girish S, lodged a complaint stating that his uncle's son, Rechana P, a resident of Nakamba Circle, was attacked by unknown persons. The assailants allegedly stabbed Rechana in the upper left chest and on the left side of his back with a sharp weapon, causing severe bleeding injuries that led to his death.

Based on the complaint, the KP Agrahara police registered a case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and launched an investigation. During the probe, police arrested three accused — Sagar Das (24), Saurabh Biswal (25) and Subrakant Bhuviya (35) — all natives of Kendrapara district in Odisha. The accused were residing at the same address as the deceased in Bhuvaneshwari Nagar.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the accused, who lived next door to the deceased, got into an altercation with Rechana over a trivial issue that escalated into a violent attack. Police said the accused, who were reportedly intoxicated on New Year's Eve, knocked on the door of Rechana's house. When Rechana came out to question them, an argument broke out and soon turned into a fight. In the ensuing scuffle, the accused allegedly stabbed Rechana with a knife and assaulted him, causing fatal injuries that led to his death on the spot. Further investigation is under way. **–BMB**

Expensive jewellery vanishes overnight

A businessman lost gold jewellery and expensive watches worth ₹1.37 crore after his house was allegedly burgled while his family was away celebrating the New Year. Following a complaint filed on December 31, 2025, the Sadashivanagar police registered a case of house burglary, naming a domestic help as the prime suspect.

The complainant, Abhishek, stated that his family had employed Hazira Begum as a domestic help in 2022, and that she lived in a room within their house. Although she had stopped working in 2024, she returned to work three days before the incident, on December 27, 2025.

On the morning of December 30, the family locked their house and left for Coimbatore via their in-laws' house in Palace Guttahalli, entrusting Hazira with one set of keys. Later that evening, the family realised that Hazira was unreachable, with both her phone and her husband's phone switched off.

When relatives entered the house using a spare key, they found cupboards and drawers ransacked. CCTV footage allegedly showed Hazira and her husband, Shahir, entering the house using keys and leaving with bags containing stolen items.

The stolen property includes nearly 979 grams of gold jewellery and seven watches, with the total loss estimated at ₹1.37 crore. Police have registered a case and launched a search for the accused. Further investigation is under way. **–BMB**

Rare 'Sandalwood Leopard' spotted in Karnataka

Researchers from Holématthi Nature Foundation (HNF) have documented a rare leopard colour morph for the first time in Karnataka, in Vijayanagara district, marking only the second confirmed record of such an individual in India.

Unlike the typical tawny coat with black rosettes, this leopard displays a pale reddish-pink coat, reminiscent of sandalwood, with light-brown rosettes. The unusual colouration is believed to stem from a genetic anomaly involving either excess red pigmentation or reduced dark pigmentation. To give the animal a local identity rooted in Karnataka's cultural heritage, HNF has named it the "Sandalwood Leopard," said Sanjay Gubbi. Internationally known as Strawberry leopards, such morphs have been sporadically recorded in South Africa and once in Tanzania. The Vijayanagara leopard, a 6–7-year-old female, was documented through camera traps and was photographed with a cub showing normal coat colouration.

Based on visual evidence, the leopard may exhibit hypomelanism or erythrism—naturally occurring genetic traits—but definitive confirmation would require DNA analysis from non-invasive samples. The discovery emerged during HNF's ongoing camera-trapping surveys to estimate leopard populations in the Kalyana-Karnataka region, where Karnataka is estimated to support nearly 2,500 leopards, underscoring the state's critical role in large carnivore conservation efforts. — BMB

Sandalwood Leopard camera-trapped in Vijayanagara district, Karnataka

Sad update: 2 out of 4 rescued leopard cubs die

Abandoned cubs rescued from Taverekere nursery site die under care as officials await post-mortem findings to determine exact cause

File photo of the rescued cubs in an incubator

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Found days-old during land clearing, four leopard cubs were rescued but could not be reunited with their mother. Human disturbance hampered efforts, leaving two survivors under constant veterinary monitoring care

Two out of the four leopard cubs, rescued from Dodda Alada Mara in Tavarekere in West Bengaluru on December 30, have died. The cubs, both females, were being cared for at the People for Animals (PfA) Wildlife Hospital, where they were kept in an incubator under veterinary supervision. However, the two cubs died late on the night of January 1.

The exact cause of death is yet to be determined. "We were informed about the death of two cubs late at night on Thursday. A post-mortem has been conducted and we are awaiting the results to pinpoint the cause of death," an official from the Karnataka Forest Department said. All four cubs, believed to be just a few days old, were rescued after being found abandoned on the outskirts of the city on the morning of December 30. A local plant nursery owner spotted the cubs while clearing ground vegetation and bushes and alerted the Forest Department.

Following the alert, the Karnataka Forest Department coordinated with PfA to carry out the rescue operation. Although the cubs were safely rescued by PfA's Quick Rescue Reaction Team, efforts to reunite them with their mother were unsuccessful.

Forest officials conducted an extensive search of the surrounding area but were unable to trace the mother. An attempt to reunite the cubs with her was made on December 31, but the effort did not succeed. The cubs were then placed in an incubator to improve their chances of survival.

"We believe the mother may have reached Taverekere from the Basavana Betta forest area. We waited for several hours, but she did not turn up. Human disturbance in the area was a major factor that hampered reunion attempts. Wild animals abandoning cubs is not unusual," said Ravindra Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Bengaluru Urban.

The two surviving cubs continue to remain under observation and care at the PfA Wildlife Hospital. Forest Department officials said a decision on attempting another reunion with the mother would be taken once the cubs grow stronger.

After year-long delay, street lights finally shine on Kensington Road

Following civic apathy and safety fears, long-pending street lighting on Kensington Road is partially restored, easing pedestrian movement and night-time commuting

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Residents of Kallahalli heaved a sigh of relief as the much-delayed and much-needed illumination of Kensington Road finally began a few days ago. The residents, especially pedestrians, used to struggle a lot to walk on Kensington Road in the absence of street lights.

Residents said the authorities concerned failed to install new street lights on Kensington Road, which was white-topped more than a year ago. Bangalore Mirror had highlighted the issue in a report titled Kensington Road left in darkness by civic neglect on September 15, 2025, detailing how pedestrians were forced to depend on vehicle headlights while fears of accidents mounted due to poor visibility.

Street lights finally glow on Kensington Road, easing fears for pedestrians and motorists after months of unsafe, poorly lit night-time commutes

Questioning the delay despite the installation of street light poles, Zafar Sait, a motorist who uses the road daily, said the authorities waited until the end of the year to switch on the lights. "I think of the street lights on Kensington Road as a New Year gift for pedestrians and motorists. They should not have taken so much time to switch on the lights," he said. Sait added that officials must inspect the road at night to ensure that every lamp is functioning, noting that a few lights were still not operational. Residents said the illumination has brought much-needed relief to commuters and pedestrians, especially those returning home after alighting from BMTC buses at nearby stops now. Kalidasa Reddy, a resident, said the lights would also benefit morning walkers. "With the street lights functioning, pedestrians can use the footpaths without fear, and it will greatly reduce the risk of road accidents," he said.

Another resident, requesting anonymity, alleged that apathy and negligence on the part of the contractor, coupled with corruption among engineers of the Bengaluru Central City Corporation, were responsible for the prolonged delay. "We struggled for over a year. It was unsafe to walk here after 7 pm, and there were instances of harassment, especially of women. Now that most of the lights are restored, we hope such incidents will not recur," the resident said. Residents urged civic officials to conduct regular maintenance checks, promptly replace faulty bulbs, and ensure the remaining non-functional lights are repaired without delay to sustain safety gains for road users.

CCTV mandatory for tobacco units from Feb 1

Tobacco manufacturing units in and around Bengaluru must install CCTV cameras from February 1, following a central government notification that also hikes excise duty on products such as pan masala, cigarettes, bidis, gutkha and zarda. Manufacturers have been directed to ensure continuous video recording of packing machine operations and preserve footage for at least 24 months. Details of machines and production capacity must be disclosed to excise authorities, who will assess output after inspections. The move comes with steep tax hikes, with tobacco products attracting 40% GST plus excise duty, officials said. — BMB

Bharat Taxi launch expected by month end

Union Government-backed cab service Bharat Taxi is likely to be launched in Bengaluru by the end of January, along with Delhi and a few other major cities. Pankaj Kumar Bansal, Additional Secretary in the Union Ministry of Cooperation, said the app-based service was earlier piloted in Delhi under a cooperative model and received a strong public response, leading to its wider rollout. Operated by the Cooperative Taxi Co-operative Limited, the platform positions itself as an alternative to private aggregators such as Ola and Uber. Bharat Taxi promises transparent fares and improved earnings for drivers, with over 1.4 lakh drivers already registered. — BMB

KSRTC launches 'Sarige Mitra' app for staff

In a move to boost transparency and efficiency, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has launched the 'Sarige Mitra' HRMS mobile application for its employees. Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy inaugurated the app, marking a key step in digitising attendance, service records and personnel data. The app features geo-fencing–based attendance, monthly tracking, access to personal and service details, family and nominee information, salary slips, leave management and an internal communication system. Employees can also view departmental circulars on their phones. KSRTC Managing Director Akram Pasha attended the launch. — BMB

Mining expansion threatens Karnataka's forest revival

The state government's move to equate mining and afforestation has alarmed environmentalists, who say decades of iron and manganese mining have already ravaged forests in Ballari, Chitradurga, Tumakuru and Vijayanagar. While ₹25,000 crore has been earmarked for mining-affected region development, only ₹26.55 crore is set aside for forest restoration under a committee led by Justice Sudarshan Reddy. Activists warn this imbalance is stark, especially as around 40 mining firms remain active. Fresh clearances, including 401 hectares in Sandur, could fell nearly one lakh trees, undermining afforestation efforts and threatening forest-dependent livelihoods. — BMB

New Year property rush begins

New Year property offers have kick-started a fresh wave of interest among homebuyers and investors, with Nelamangala emerging as one of the most preferred destinations on the Bengaluru outskirts.

Builders and developers across the region are introducing attractive discounts, flexible payment plans and added benefits, such as free legal fees and extended possession dates, to draw buyers early in 2026.

Market experts say the combination of competitive pricing and expanding infrastructure has made Nelamangala a hotspot for those seeking long-term value.

"With improved connectivity to Bengaluru and upcoming Metro expansions, Nelamangala offers both affordability and convenience," said real estate analyst Rohan Shetty. "Buyers are actively exploring projects here because they get more space and better prices compared with the city."

Several developers have reported strong enquiries since the first week of January. Shweta Rao, a sales head, added, "Our New Year property offers have drawn buyers from across age groups. Many first-time homeowners and investors are considering Nelamangala because of its growth potential and lifestyle appeal." **BMB**

Six-lane MAR promises traffic relief

Come early 2026, Bengaluru motorists can look forward to major traffic relief, as the Major Arterial Road (MAR), a six-lane, access-controlled link connecting the Bengaluru–Mysuru Expressway to Magadi Road, is expected to open to the public.

Built by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) at an estimated cost of `500 crore, the 11-km corridor is designed to decongest the busy expressway and offer direct, toll-free access through Kambipura, Challaghatta, Kenchanapura and Machohalli. Once operational, the drive from Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout to the expressway will take just a few minutes — a significant shift from the current bottlenecks.

The BDA is racing against time to complete the final leg of construction, mainly the railway underpass near Challaghatta, which is pending technical clearance from South Western Railway.

With 90 per cent of the work already completed, the agency expects to finish the final stretch and open the road between January and February 2026.

For residents of western Bengaluru, the project promises smoother commutes, reduced travel times and improved connectivity to the growing outer suburbs.

Urban planners also see it as a stepping stone towards a larger mobility network — the proposed Peripheral Ring Road (PRR-2), which will integrate the MAR with underpasses, cloverleaf interchanges and signal-free corridors connecting Mysuru Road, Hosur Road and beyond. **BMB**

Tier cities lure property investors

For investors planning major real estate moves in 2026, Karnataka offers several attractive options across Tier 1, 2 and 3 cities. Bengaluru remains the top choice, backed by its robust IT sector, start-up ecosystem, strong connectivity and modern infrastructure, drawing professionals, families and students from across India.

Realtors say apartment prices vary widely, from ₹5,000–7,000 per sq ft in affordable localities to ₹7,000–10,500 per sq ft in mid-segment areas, with premium locations crossing ₹11,000 per sq ft and some projects touching over ₹15,000 per sq ft, depending on the site and facilities. The city's status as both a workplace and a long-term residential hub continues to strengthen its appeal.

Realtors add that Mysuru and Mangaluru are also emerging as strong investment destinations.

Mysuru, known for its heritage palaces, gardens and historic charm, offers affordable property options ranging from ₹2,400 to ₹3,600 per sq ft, depending on the locality. Mangaluru, a coastal city with scenic beaches, reputed schools and rising demand for premium housing, typically sees residential prices between ₹4,000 and ₹7,500 per sq ft.

"The combination of cultural appeal, lifestyle, infrastructure and growth potential makes these cities viable alternatives for investors seeking long-term gains in Karnataka," another realtor said. **BMB**

City leads office supply growth

Bengaluru emerged as the largest contributor to new office completions in 2025, adding nearly 13.5 million sq ft of fresh supply — an 8 per cent increase over the previous year — according to data from ANAROCK Research. The city outpaced all other major markets as total new office supply across the top seven cities rose 8 per cent year-on-year to about 51.83 million sq ft.

Bengaluru's steady development pipeline stood in contrast to sharper supply declines in markets such as the Mumbai Metropolitan Region and Hyderabad, where new completions fell significantly. While other cities, including Pune and the National Capital Region (NCR), reported higher percentage growth, Bengaluru retained its position as the country's largest office market by scale, reinforcing its role as a long-term hub for corporate occupiers and institutional developers. **BMB**

Builders go luxury, dump budget

Affordable housing is rapidly disappearing from India's major cities as developers shift focus to premium and luxury projects, forcing lenders to rethink growth strategies, according to a report based on Antique Stock Broking's BFSI Conference 2025. Developers are unwilling to build homes priced below ₹50 lakh due to high land costs, thin margins and reduced incentives under the revamped PMAY framework.

Lenders cited two key headwinds: the exit of developers from the affordable segment and the drying up of builder-led projects in Tier I and II cities. In markets such as Mumbai, steep land prices have made affordable housing unviable, pushing builders towards higher-ticket homes. Demand for ₹2–3 crore homes is rising even as affordable supply shrinks.

Banks, not suited for micro-level assessments, are expected to participate through co-lending partnerships. Housing finance companies must deepen their presence in smaller cities and focus on non-salaried borrowers, where yields are higher and competition lower. **— TIMES PROPERTY**

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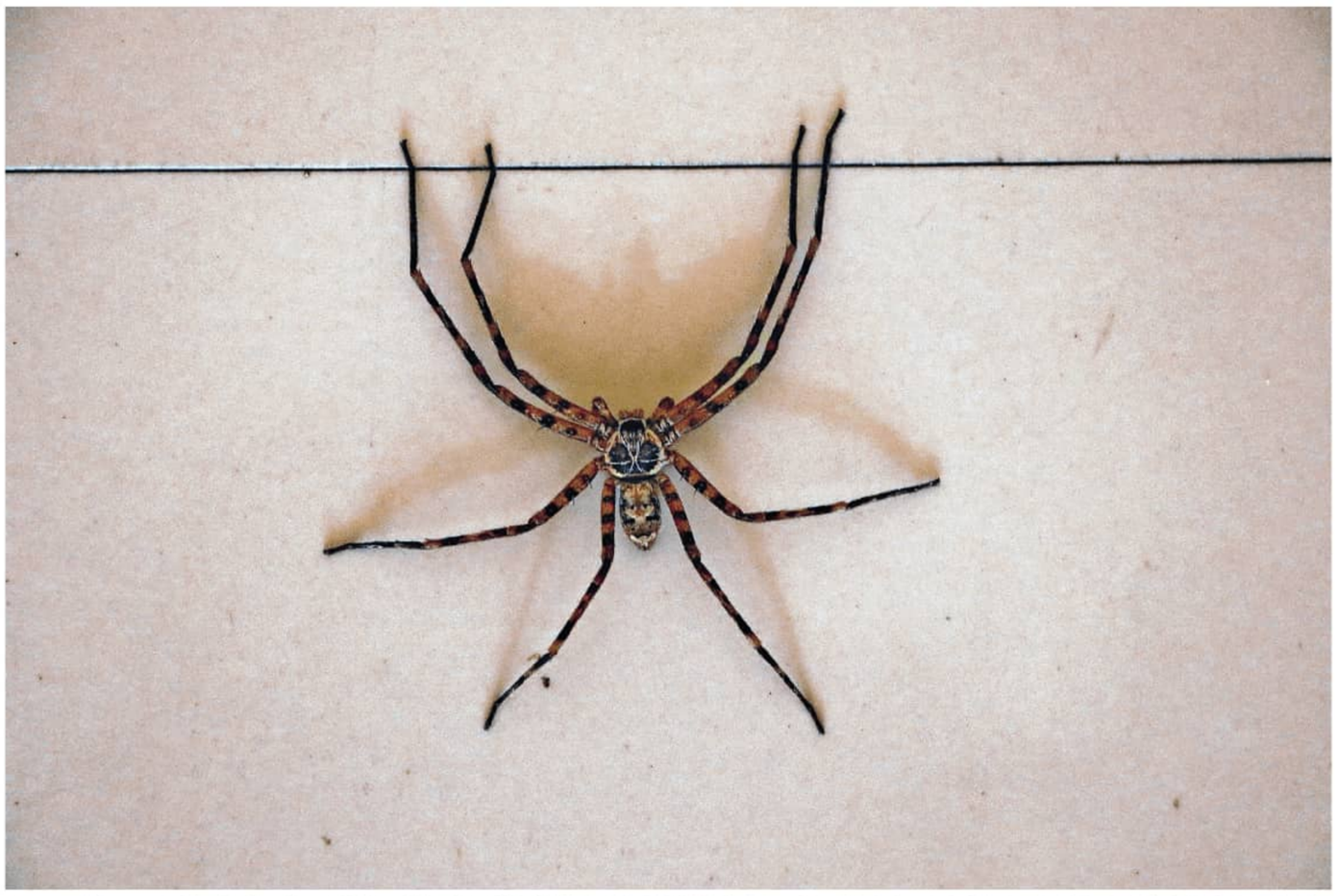
BENGALURU SPEAKS

and gets heard on this page

STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

CORRIDOR NIGHT HUNTER

Our reader shares a striking image of a pantropical huntsman spider—also known as the giant crab or cane spider—spotted in a hotel corridor in Munnar. A nocturnal, fast-moving predator, it hunts actively for prey instead of weaving webs.



The picture was clicked by reader **NJ Ravi Chander**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com**

Year-end revelry fuels record liquor, metro, bus revenues in Bengaluru

Festive crowds, longer nights and spending drove excise collections and public transport revenues to record highs across city during Christmas and New Year festivities

Bengaluru's year-end celebrations delivered a strong business windfall, with liquor sales and public transport emerging as the biggest gainers during Christmas and New Year festivities. From packed pubs and retail liquor outlets to crowded Metro stations and late-night buses, the city's festive economy translated directly into record revenues, underlining Bengaluru's role as a major consumption and services hub in the state.

Between December 23 and 31, Karnataka's excise department collected a record ₹1,319.11 crore, far exceeding official projections. This marked a 10.19 per cent increase compared to the same period last year, with the final three days alone contributing ₹587 crore. Across the state, consumers purchased 22.59 lakh boxes of Indian Made Liquor and 15.27 lakh boxes of beer during the nine-day period, pushing the total value of liquor sold to nearly ₹1,669 crore. Officials said this was the highest-ever collection recorded for a year-end phase, driven by parties, tourism and extended holidays.

Millions of liquor and beer boxes sold statewide during the holiday period, pushing excise collections far beyond official estimates

Bengaluru emerged as the single largest contributor to this surge. Between December 29 and 31, liquor sales in the city touched ₹247 crore, generating ₹181.53 crore in excise revenue. During these three days, 2.48 lakh boxes of Indian Made Liquor and 2.20 lakh boxes of beer were sold within the city limits. Compared to the previous year, liquor sales in Bengaluru rose sharply by 43.22 per cent, reinforcing the capital's dominance in the state's excise collections. Industry observers attributed the trend to higher disposable incomes, a strong nightlife economy and steady tourist inflows.

Bengaluru's Christmas-New Year rush translates into soaring liquor sales and packed Metro, with excise, buses and rail posting sharp gains, highlighting the city's dominance in Karnataka's festive economy this holiday season

December as a whole proved exceptional for the excise department. Across Karnataka, 63.71 lakh boxes of Indian Made Liquor and 36.14 lakh boxes of beer were sold during the month, translating into liquor trade worth over ₹4,425 crore. Excise revenue for December alone stood at ₹3,559.08 crore, up by ₹454.58 crore from December last year. On regular days, liquor sales typically generate ₹65 to ₹70 crore, highlighting the scale of the festive spike.

Public transport systems also benefited from the celebrations. Namma Metro recorded earnings of ₹3.08 crore on New Year's Day, with services extended until 3.10 am to cater to late-night revellers. Nearly 8.93 lakh passengers travelled across the network, a significant jump from last year. BMTC too saw increased demand, earning around ₹10 lakh in a single day after operating 200 additional trips to key nightlife hubs across the city, underscoring how festive mobility demand translated into higher public transport revenues citywide, reinforcing Bengaluru's status as Karnataka's primary engine of consumption-led economic activity. **— BMB**

DID YOU KNOW?

2026 is set to be a spectacular year for skywatchers and space enthusiasts, with dramatic celestial events unfolding from Earth's skies to the far side of the moon. The year begins with renewed lunar ambition. For the first time in over 50 years, astronauts will journey back toward the moon, flying past its far side on a 10-day mission under NASA's Artemis program. Alongside them, a wave of robotic landers from the U.S. and China will target new regions, including the moon's south pole, hunting for water ice. Jeff Bezos' towering Blue Moon lander prototype is also slated for a test flight. Eclipses will steal the spotlight. A rare ring-of-fire solar eclipse will sweep Antarctica in February, followed by a total solar eclipse on August 12 crossing Greenland, Iceland, and Spain. Lunar eclipses will add to the show. Planet lovers can expect striking alignments, with up to six planets visible together in February and August. Three supermoons, including a dazzling Christmas Eve finale, will brighten the nights. Meanwhile, fading interstellar comet 3I/Atlas and heightened aurora activity promise reminders that our universe is still full of surprises. — AP

GET HEARD WITH MIRROR

9591233247

Let's see how much you know about Namma Bengaluru, folks. Tell us something incredible and mind-boggling about this beautiful city and our editors and researchers will check it out. If it's credible, we'll give it a shout-out, with your name and picture.

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Is RBI discontinuing ₹500 notes from March 2026? Here's what govt says about it

The Claim: Social media posts claim the RBI will stop supplying ₹500 notes through ATMs and discontinue their circulation from March 2026, warning people to withdraw or exchange cash immediately as the denomination is allegedly set to be demonetised nationwide.
Fact: The PIB Fact Check team has clarified the claim is fake. The RBI has made no announcement to withdraw or discontinue ₹500 notes. They remain legal tender, and ATMs will continue dispensing ₹500 notes along with ₹100 and ₹200 denominations.

A lot of folks make claims on social media that might not be accurate, but they make it sound legit. Sometimes, these claims create so much confusion that the government has to step in.

A similar message is making rounds on social media claiming that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will halt the distribution of Rs 500 notes from automated teller machines (ATMs) starting March 2026. The message also said that the government plans to stop circulating Rs 500 notes in March 2026. The PIB Fact Check team has dismissed social media claims suggesting that the RBI will discontinue the circulation of Rs 500 notes by March 2026.

Clarifying the issue, the PIB Fact Check team says all such claims are fake and the RBI has made no such announcement. The PIB Fact Check team has assured people that the Rs 500 currency note continues to be legal tender and people can use it for cash transactions. The Fact Check team has also requested people to stay cautious and not believe such rumours. "Don't fall for such misinformation. Always verify news from official sources before believing or sharing it," the PIB Fact Check team says in its social media post.

ATMs have Rs 500 notes in majority

This claim is FAKE
No such decision has been taken by the Reserve Bank of India
RBI TO STOP ₹500 NOTES FROM ATMS BY MARCH 2026 !
FAKE
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In most cases, ATMs have notes of Rs 500 denominations for disbursal. Though some ATMs also have Rs 100 and Rs 200 notes, most prefer Rs 500 notes as it helps people withdraw large amounts in one go. If the government stops the withdrawal of Rs 500 notes from ATMs, it will create panic among people as they will find it difficult to withdraw large amounts.

Past claims about discontinuation of Rs 500 notes

This is not the first time that such rumours are being spread on social media. The government often has to step in to debunk such false claims. In June 2025 also, the Fact Check team had debunked one such claim where, in a widely circulated YouTube clip on social media, an anchor was claiming that Rs 500 notes would be demonetised in March 2026.

Minister said ATMs would continue dispensing Rs 500 notes

In August 2025 also, Pankaj Chaudhary, Minister of State, Ministry of Finance, said in the Rajya Sabha that the government has no proposal to stop the supply of Rs 500 notes. He also said that ATMs would continue disbursing Rs 500 notes alongside Rs 100 and Rs 200 notes. **— ET Online**

Karnataka's men are dying younger than its women

Data reveals that women in state have nearly five years longer life expectancy compared to men, highlighting need to reassess state's health priorities and focus

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FILE PHOTO

Age pattern points to non-communicable diseases and external risks as factors in reducing men's life expectancy, with heart disease, diabetes, cancers, accidents and stress being possible contributors

Is there a difference in how long men and women live in Karnataka? The answer, buried in official data, is both stark and unsettling. Men in the state are dying nearly five years earlier than women, and the loss is not happening at birth or in childhood, but quietly in middle age, when lives are busiest and families most dependent.

As per the study based on the Sample Registration System (SRS) 2022 data, a boy born in Karnataka today can expect to live 67.49 years, while a girl can expect to live 72.18 years. What makes this gap alarming is where it begins. The biggest loss of male life years occurs between 45 and 59, exposing a public health crisis that rarely makes headlines.

Midlife loss

According to the study 'Age Contributions to Gender Differences in Life Expectancy Inequality in Southern States of India Using the Arriaga Approach' by Dr Anjana A from the University of Kerala, the 45 to 49 age group alone makes the single largest contribution to Karnataka's life expectancy gap. Child and adolescent mortality, once the main concern, now play a minimal role in shaping inequality.

This marks a clear turning point. Karnataka has largely succeeded in keeping its children alive. But it is losing men when they are economically productive, supporting families and contributing to the state's growth. Every death in this age group carries social and financial consequences far beyond the individual.

Southern divide

A comparison with neighbouring states highlights how Karnataka is falling behind its better performing peers. Kerala remains the regional leader, with life expectancy at birth of 72.08 years for men and 78.21 years for women. There, inequality peaks much later, around 65 to 69 years, reflecting strong survival through working ages. Tamil Nadu performs better than Karnataka despite facing similar pressures of urbanisation and industrial growth. Its gender gap is spread across middle adulthood rather than concentrated sharply in the late forties. Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, however, mirror Karnataka's pattern, with middle age emerging as the most dangerous phase for men.

In Telangana, ages 45 to 59 contribute close to four years to the life expectancy gap. Andhra Pradesh shows a similar trend, reinforcing that the challenge in these states is no longer early life survival but adult health.

Silent killers

While the SRS based report does not list causes of death, the age pattern points strongly towards non-communicable diseases and external risks. Heart disease, diabetes, cancers, road accidents and work-related stress tend to peak in middle age. Men are more exposed due to lifestyle choices, occupational hazards and delayed help-seeking. The data also shows that the gender gap narrows after 70, suggesting that most of the damage to male survival has already occurred well before old age.

Policy wake-up call

The findings call for a rethink in Karnataka's health priorities. Child health gains have reached a plateau. Future improvements in life expectancy will depend on preventing avoidable deaths among adults. This means investing in early screening for chronic diseases, strengthening primary healthcare, improving road safety and addressing mental health and workplace stress.

Data speaks

K Krishnamurthy, a health expert, said, "The SRS 2022 numbers deliver a blunt message. Karnataka is no longer failing its children. It is failing its middle-aged men. Unless the state acts on this evidence, the gap between men and women will continue to widen, keeping Karnataka behind southern leaders like Kerala and Tamil Nadu."

Inheritance rules clouded by drafting error

The Karnataka High Court has pointed out a drafting flaw in the amended Hindu Succession Act, observing that certain provisions may have unintentionally created uncertainty regarding inheritance rights. The court said the issue appears to stem from an omission rather than a deliberate legislative intent and urged the Union government to examine the matter.

A division bench comprising Justices R Devdas and B Muralidhara Pai noted that Section 6 of the Act, which was substantially revised in 2005 to grant daughters equal coparcenary rights, no longer expressly refers to some Class-I heirs, including widows and mothers. According to the court, this omission could lead to confusion when determining the shares of legal heirs in ancestral property.

Court urges review of provision to safeguard succession rights of mothers and widows

The judges explained that under the pre-amended law, a notional partition was assumed upon the death of a male coparcener, clearly recognising the entitlement of widows and other heirs. However, the amended provision focuses primarily on the rights of daughters and does not explicitly preserve references to these other beneficiaries, resulting in what the court described as an "inadvertent ambiguity".

The observation arose during the hearing of appeals related to a property dispute from Koppal district. The case involved the division of ancestral land following the death of the property owner in 2008. The first wife and the children from a subsequent relationship were contesting their respective shares. While applying the amended law, the High Court held that the widow was entitled to half of the ancestral property in her own right, with the remaining portion to be distributed among her and the children.

The court emphasised that there was no indication that Parliament intended to dilute or remove the inheritance rights of widows or mothers. It directed that a copy of the judgment be forwarded to the Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs, recommending that the provision be revisited to explicitly safeguard the rights of all Class-I heirs and avoid inconsistent interpretations in future cases. **–BMB**

Legal fraternity pushes for housing support

Advocates' association approaches govt regarding housing concerns, highlights financial struggles and rising costs while urging accommodation provisions

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The Five Year Law Course Advocates Association has urged the Karnataka government to introduce a dedicated housing scheme for advocates in Bengaluru, citing the severe financial stress faced by a large section of the legal fraternity, especially junior lawyers.

In a representation submitted to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the association highlighted that despite the common perception of lawyers being financially well-off, the reality on the ground is starkly different for many practising advocates. Rising living costs and soaring real estate prices in Bengaluru have made home ownership unattainable for a significant number of lawyers, forcing many to live in precarious conditions.

"While the legal profession is often perceived as affluent, the ground reality for many practising advocates is starkly different. A significant number of our members, particularly junior advocates and those from humble backgrounds, are living a hand-to-mouth existence," said S Umesh, President of the Five Year Law Course Advocates Association.

File photo of past protest organised by B'luru lawyers

According to the association, the lack of affordable housing is pushing young advocates out of the profession, as financial insecurity makes it difficult for them to sustain long-term legal practice in the city.

"The skyrocketing cost of living and property prices in Bengaluru have made it impossible for many advocates to own a home or even secure a modest residential site," Umesh said.

Advocates play a critical role in the justice delivery system, the association noted, acting as protectors of constitutional rights and legal safeguards for citizens. However, without basic housing security, many lawyers are struggling to practise with dignity and peace of mind.

Niranjan, an advocate, said, "Junior advocates are silently struggling. The absence of a dedicated housing scheme is forcing many capable young lawyers to reconsider their future in the profession."

The association has placed three key demands before the state government: the formulation of a dedicated housing welfare scheme for advocates, allocation of government land within or on the outskirts of Bengaluru for the development of an 'Advocates' Colony', and provision of low-interest housing loans through state-owned cooperatives for registered members of the Bar.

The association expressed hope that such an initiative would not only support struggling advocates but also strengthen the legal ecosystem in the state.

Illegal constructions, a burning problem

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

However, he brazenly gave us the bizarre suggestion of filing a police complaint against the Executive Engineer (EE) and Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) who had failed to implement the order. In effect, he refused to pull up his own staff officials who were his direct reportees under his authority and instead asked citizens to file police cases against them. Such is our governance. No wonder our buildings burn," he said. According to the BBMP order, a direction was issued to demolish the unauthorised portion of the building, but it was never carried out. No follow-up action was taken thereafter, and this prolonged inaction over nearly three years ultimately cost lives.

New order

Now the GBA has come up with another order stating that all serviced apartments, hostel and PG owners/operators/managers within the jurisdiction of BECC are directed to immediately review, rectify, and ensure strict compliance with all prescribed safety protocols, including authorised use of LPG/gas connections, prohibition of illegal or unsafe gas cylinders, adequate ventilation and fire safety measures, functional fire extinguishers and emergency exits, electrical safety without overloading, and possession of valid and subsisting Trade Licenses and registrations. A period of seven days from the date of this statement is granted to rectify all deficiencies. Thereafter, BECC (Public Health) officers will conduct special inspection drives, and strict penal action will be initiated against non-compliant establishments, including closure/sealing of premises, cancellation or suspension of Trade Licenses, penalties under the Greater Bangalore Authority Act, 2024 and other applicable laws, and prosecution where violations endanger life and safety.

However, citizens said that though this has been an ongoing issue for years, why were the authorities waiting for all this time, when preventive measures could have been taken much earlier. They also noted that illegal buildings are rampant across Mahadevpura, yet little to no action has been initiated against such violations.

Sandeep Anirudhan, Convenor - Citizens' Agenda for Bengaluru, "Only when there's a disaster such as a building collapse or a fire, does the government or public wake up to the menace of illegal buildings."

He said the building that caught fire had a final demolition notice issued more than two years ago. "Setbacks, FSI, fire safety norms are all violated in open daylight. Buildings are getting constructed even without building plan approvals. Yet, the government fails to demolish them. This is pretty much the case all over Mahadevapura - illegal layouts and thousands of illegal buildings are all over the place, and the government seems to be asleep," he said.

He said in this case, the neighbouring residential building that had complied with the norms was damaged due to the fire in this illegal building. "Why should law abiding citizens be at risk due to violators? Why is there no disciplinary action against GBA officials who fail to do their duty to enforce bye laws, and to protect society? Why is the GBA Act silent on disciplinary action against officials for dereliction and corruption?" he asked

A resident of Kundalahalli remarked that the new GBA order appears to be mere eyewash. "Despite a demolition order being issued, no action was taken. When construction first began, we repeatedly asked the owner to show the approved plan to verify its legality. We approached the BBMP and later approached the High Court only after BBMP itself responded and issued a demolition order. However, the owner obtained a stay and continued construction without being questioned. We raised objections when the building was just two floors, but it has now grown to nearly six floors on a 30×40 site, accommodating around 60 PG residents. How is this even permissible?" the resident said.

Citizens say though there are clear guidelines limiting the number of floors, yet violations continue unchecked. "Why did authorities act only after lives were lost, despite being aware of the illegalities and receiving repeated complaints? Who will take responsibility for these deaths, when most buildings here are operating illegally without basic mandated facilities?" said a citizen.

Residents of the area said that as per a Supreme Court Order of December 2024, illegal buildings should not be given power connection, water connection, sewage connection, and no kind of trade licence to operate any business.

"But all these illegal buildings are freely operating PG businesses, with power, water and sewage connections. It is a contempt of the Supreme Court by the GBA," they said.

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I, Saira Bano Rafeeq Ahmed W/o Shaik Rafeeq Ahmed R/o No 4 Skanda Nilaya 3rd Floor Kothnur Main Road Navodaya Nagar Jp Nagar 7th Phase Bengaluru - 560078 Have Changed My Name to Saira Banu for All Purposes.

I Sheryn Samson Sugirtharaj Samuel S/O, Sugirtharaj Samuel R/o 301, Samudrika Sunshine, Sri Krishna Temple Road, Mahadevpura, Bangalore - 560048 have changed my name to Sheryn Samson.

I, Salman Ahmed Shaik Saleem Ahmed S/o Shaik Saleem Ahmed R/o No 4 Skanda Nilaya 3rd Floor Kothnur Main Road Navodaya Nagar Jp Nagar 7th Phase Bengaluru-560078 Have Changed My Name to Shaik Salman Ahmed for All Purposes.

I Muralidhar.N S/O Narayan B S, Flat No 106, Roshan Platinum Apartments, BDA 80 FT Road, Arekere, Opposite Indira Canteen, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore - 560076 have changed my name to Muralidhar Narayan for all purpose.

I Lakshita Deepakkumar Pugalia W/O, Siddharth Gandhi R/o Ph 1, A Block, Mantri Greens Apartment, 17th Floor, No 1 Sampige Road, Bengaluru - 560003 have changed my name to Lakshita Pugalia.

I, Tajunnissa W/o Aslam Pasha R/o No 7/1 1st Main 5th Cross Opp Four Stroke Garage, SR K Garden Jayanagar, Bengaluru 560041 Have Changed My Name to Tajunnisa for All Purposes.

I, NILUFER (Old Name) W/o Ameer Pyare Jan resident of No 175, 4th Main Road, Ramachandrapuram, Bangalore -560021 have changed my name to NILUFAR ATHAULLA (New Name)) vide affidavit dated: 31/12/2025 Before Notary M.K.Devaki Bangalore.

I,SOHEL R/o. Flat-B210,vakil marigold B block,R4 Anekal taluk,chandapura B'luru 560099 have changed my name to Sohel M Magi for all purposes.

I, Najma Roohi W/O Mohammed Roshan Pasha # 9 Bharathinagar Bengaluru-01 have changed my name to Najma Roohi R for all purposes

I Vishakha Prayas Sanganeria D/O, Shiv Shankar Goenka R/o No 731, 17th Cross, 24th Main, Jp Nagar 6th Phase, Bengaluru - 560078 have changed my name to Vishakha Goenka.

I, formerly known as Saraswathi Thimmegowda, have changed my name to Saraswathi Rangaswamy, residing at No. 405, Kasturinagar, Blr – 560016 for all purposes and records.

I, MITRESH, S/o, LATE. SRIPATHY BALLAL, residing at No.159, Phase 2, Behind Meenakshi Temple, Banner ghatta Main Road, Bangalore-560076. have changed my name to MITRESH BALLAL, vide affidavit dt: 02-01-2026 before notary Renuka .C, B.lore.

I Anand Kumar S/O, Mahendra Kumar R/o No6 , 2nd Floor , Jain Temple Street , V V Puram , Bangalore , 560004 have changed my name to Anand Kumar M Jain.

I Shibu Hussain Yousuf Arakkal S/O, Arakkal Yousuf R/o No 663, 1st Main, C Block, Aecs Layout, Kundalahalli, Bengaluru - 560037 have changed my name to Shibu Arakkal.

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Cabinet clears 153-acre Basavanna Biodiversity Park

After a gap of more than one and a half centuries, Bengaluru is set to get a new large-scale park. The State Cabinet has approved the development of the 153-acre Vishwaguru Basavanna Biodiversity Park, Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar B Khandre announced on Thursday.

Addressing a press conference after the Cabinet meeting, the minister said the project has been sanctioned with an outlay of ₹50 crore to develop the park as a vital green lung and a major recreational space for the city.

Tracing the city's green history, Khandre recalled that Lalbagh was developed in 1760 over 240 acres, while Cubbon Park, spread across 197 acres, came up in 1870—making it 153–155 years since Bengaluru last saw the creation of a large park. Although several smaller parks have been developed since then, no major green space of this scale had been created, he said.

The proposed park will be developed at Madappanahalli near Yelahanka in Bengaluru North taluk and will become the third-largest park in the state capital. With the long-standing vision of a new large park finally taking shape after nearly 150 years, Khandre described the project as a once-in-a-century achievement.

He explained that the 153-acre land parcel had earlier been handed over to the Karnataka Forest Development Corporation for plantation purposes. The land has now been reclaimed by the Forest Department. **BMB**

BMTC buses stuck in unending jam at KG station

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

disappointment with the authorities and the traffic police for not solving the gridlock problem caused by the BMTC buses. "Gridlocks have become routine on Sundays due to lack of space inside the KG Bus Station and many buses arriving at the same time from different destinations. We have no other option than waiting on the road till traffic police clear the jam," said a BMTC driver on the condition of anonymity.

Mohan Kumar N, a BMTC commuter, said the gridlocks used to occur only during festivals, but now traffic jams have become on Sundays and public holidays during the peak hours, especially in the morning. "I am from Vidyaranyapura. I boarded the BMTC bus to catch a train at Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station but I had to alight from the BMTC bus near the underpass on Dhanvantri Road and walk up to the railway station due to the traffic jam. The authorities concerned must take measures to solve this problem," said Mohan Kumar.

Expressing a similar opinion, Manjunath S, who boarded a BMTC bus at Rajajinagar, said that he too was stuck due to the jam. "The BMTC authorities and the traffic police have to ensure there are no traffic jams around KG Bus Station for commuters who want to board another BMTC bus at the KG Bus Station or catch a train at the nearby railway station," Manjunath said.

It is said that BMTC operates around 10,000 bus services on Sundays from KG Bus Station as against 8,000 to 8,500 buses during the weekdays. The reason is: More than 1,000 buses engaged by schools and public sector companies are also pressed into service as Sunday is a holiday for these institutions.

BMTC DTO, Kempe Gowda Bus Station, told BM that traffic jams at Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Junction have a cascading effect on the movement of buses on Dhanvantri Road and inside the KG Bus Station. "We are working in coordination with the traffic police to avoid gridlock around KG Bus Station," the DTO said.

The new fitness trend in town

With HYROX catching on with fitness lovers, experts say that while it is beneficial, it cannot replace traditional workouts, but rather be included in addition to them

Iffath Fathima
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TWEETS @BangaloreMirror

IN FOCUS
Workout culture

Experts urge beginners to avoid jumping into HYROX without prior workout experience to prevent injuries, recommend clean technique and control over intensity or volume

HYROX, a global fitness race that combines running with functional workouts, is rapidly gaining popularity among fitness enthusiasts in Bengaluru and worldwide. Popular amongst Gen Z, HYROX events follow a standard format, participants complete 8 rounds of 1 km running, each followed by a functional workout station such as sled push, sled pull, farmers' carry, lunges, wall balls, or burpee broad jumps. The same race format is followed across countries, allowing athletes to compare timings globally.

With its growing buzz on social media and gyms increasingly offering HYROX-specific training, the big question remains: Is HYROX a passing trend or a sustainable fitness movement?

According to Kankan Jyoti Saikia, fitness coach, HYROX appears more sustainable than typical short-term fitness fads. "People are drawn to it because it gives structure, purpose, and a competitive goal beyond normal gym workouts. It blends strength and endurance, which keeps training interesting and motivating. Moreover, the movements are basic and functional, which supports long-term relevance," said Saikia.

Mohammed Suhail, celebrity coach and founder of @FitDistrict, said, "HYROX is not a workout. It's a brand." He said that the real question isn't whether HYROX is good or bad, but whether endurance-dominant programmes are better than traditional training methods. Suhail said that endurance training is essential and must form part of any regimen, but it cannot be the whole of it. "What HYROX has done brilliantly is bring endurance to the forefront and make it the new norm. That's not wrong, but it's incomplete if taken in isolation," he said.

Beginners need to go slow

Experts caution beginners against jumping into HYROX straightaway. "For beginners especially, I would strongly not recommend jumping straight into heavy reps or high-volume endurance work, because most people haven't completed their ABCDs of fitness—alignment and posture correction, balancing muscular imbalances, creating joint stability, and developing foundational muscle strength," said Suhail. He said that skipping these steps and moving straight into HYROX-style training is a recipe for injury. "For beginners, slow movements, clean technique, and control matter far more than intensity or volume," added Suhail.

Health benefits and potential risks

Dr Vajalla Sharavani, fitness expert and founder at Tone 30 Pilates, pointed out that HYROX-style training can place high stress on the body due to the combination of heavy running volumes and loaded functional movements. Dr Sharavani said that poor load management and accumulated fatigue increase the risk of overuse injuries, especially when technique breaks down under exhaustion. "Research on hybrid training also shows that rising weekly volume without adequate recovery is closely linked to higher injury rates, making structured progression, coaching, and recovery essential rather than optional," said Dr Sharavani.

While speaking of the benefits, Dr Sharavani said that HYROX races and training hit several key fitness systems at once, significantly improving cardiorespiratory fitness, strength and muscular endurance. "The combination of running with functional movements like sled pushes, carries and lunges also supports better metabolic health and body composition, while the goal-based race format boosts motivation, discipline and long-term adherence to fitness," added Dr Sharavani.

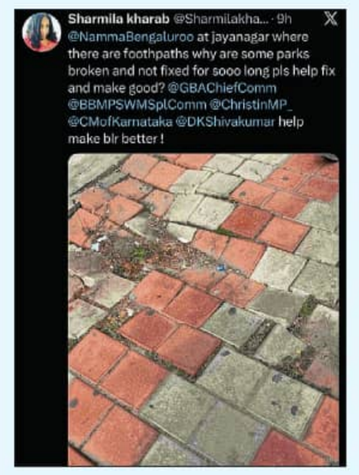
SOCIALTATTLE

THAT WENT VIRAL

Chandra R. Srikanth @chan... · 16h
Bengaluru takes you by surprise sometime
with lovely spots like this in the heart of the
city. Ended up here because the planetariu
opposite was crowded and it turned out to
so serene and beautiful
The National Military Memorial on Sankey
Road.
13
21
407
23K

Social media user points out to skip the crowded planetarium and discovered the serene National Military Memorial on Sankey Road a peaceful oasis in the heart of the city, perfect for reflection and a quiet escape from the urban hustle.

Bangalore's thoughtful touch! Nexus Mall introduces special mom-designated parking for the first time in the city. A social media user hails it as a brilliant idea that should be implemented in malls across India. Truly a step toward convenience and care


Sharmila kharab @Sharmilakha... · 9h
@NammaBengaluroo at jayanagar where
there are foothpaths why are some parks
broken and not fixed for sooo long pls help fix
and make good? @GBAChiefComm
@BBMPSWMSplComm @ChristinMP_
@CMofKarnataka @DKShivakumar help
make blr better !

WHAT'S TWEETING

A social media used posted that in Jayanagar, well-laid footpaths exist, yet some parks remain broken and neglected for years. Residents urge authorities to repair and maintain them, creating safe, clean, and enjoyable spaces for everyone in the community.

INBRIEF

NIMHANS to celebrate 50 years of SCMHC

NIMHANS is set to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Sakalawara Community Mental Health Centre (SCMHC) on January 3, 2026. Established in 1976 as a pioneering rural mental health initiative, Sakalawara brought psychiatric care closer to communities and laid the foundation for India's District Mental Health Programme (DMHP). Over five decades, the centre has evolved from outpatient services and community outreach to long-term rehabilitation, technology-enabled care, and tele-mental health services, adapting even during the COVID-19 pandemic. The anniversary programme will showcase this journey through exhibitions, commemorative sessions, and collective remembrance, highlighting Sakalawara's role in shaping community psychiatry, policy, and innovation in India. Media representatives are invited to participate and cover the milestone event at the Sakalawara Centre, which reflects the resilience and evolution of mental health care in the country. Lunch will follow the programme. –BMB

Committee to study safari impact on animals venturing out of forests

In a meeting held on January 2 under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the Karnataka State Board of Wildlife (SBWL) has decided to form an expert committee to study whether wild animals are venturing out of forest areas due to noise from safari vehicles. The committee has also been tasked to look at the number of safari vehicles in Bandipur and Nagarhole tiger reserves in relation to the number of tourists visiting.

Siddaramaiah also instructed the Karnataka Forest Department to gradually restart the safari at Nagarhole and Bandipur Tiger Reserves.

Notably, in the wake of human-wildlife conflicts, leading to the death of three farmers in villages abutting Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Mysuru, Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, in November last year, had ordered the closure of safari and trekking activities in human-wildlife conflict zones in Nagarhole and Bandipur Tiger Reserves. There have been no conflict cases in these areas following this decision.

The expert committee will also study the carrying capacity of Nagarhole and Bandipur tiger reserves and submit a report on the same.

Officials recommended formation of committee in meeting held on Friday

Former Indian cricket team captain Anil Kumble, who was appointed as Forest and Wildlife Ambassador to promote conservation and eco-awareness statewide, was also present in the meeting. He disagreed stating that wild animals venturing out of forest areas is not related to safaris. "Only 8 per cent of the forest area is used for safaris, and the livelihood of locals is closely linked to the forest. Therefore, a re-evaluation of this is necessary," said Kumble.

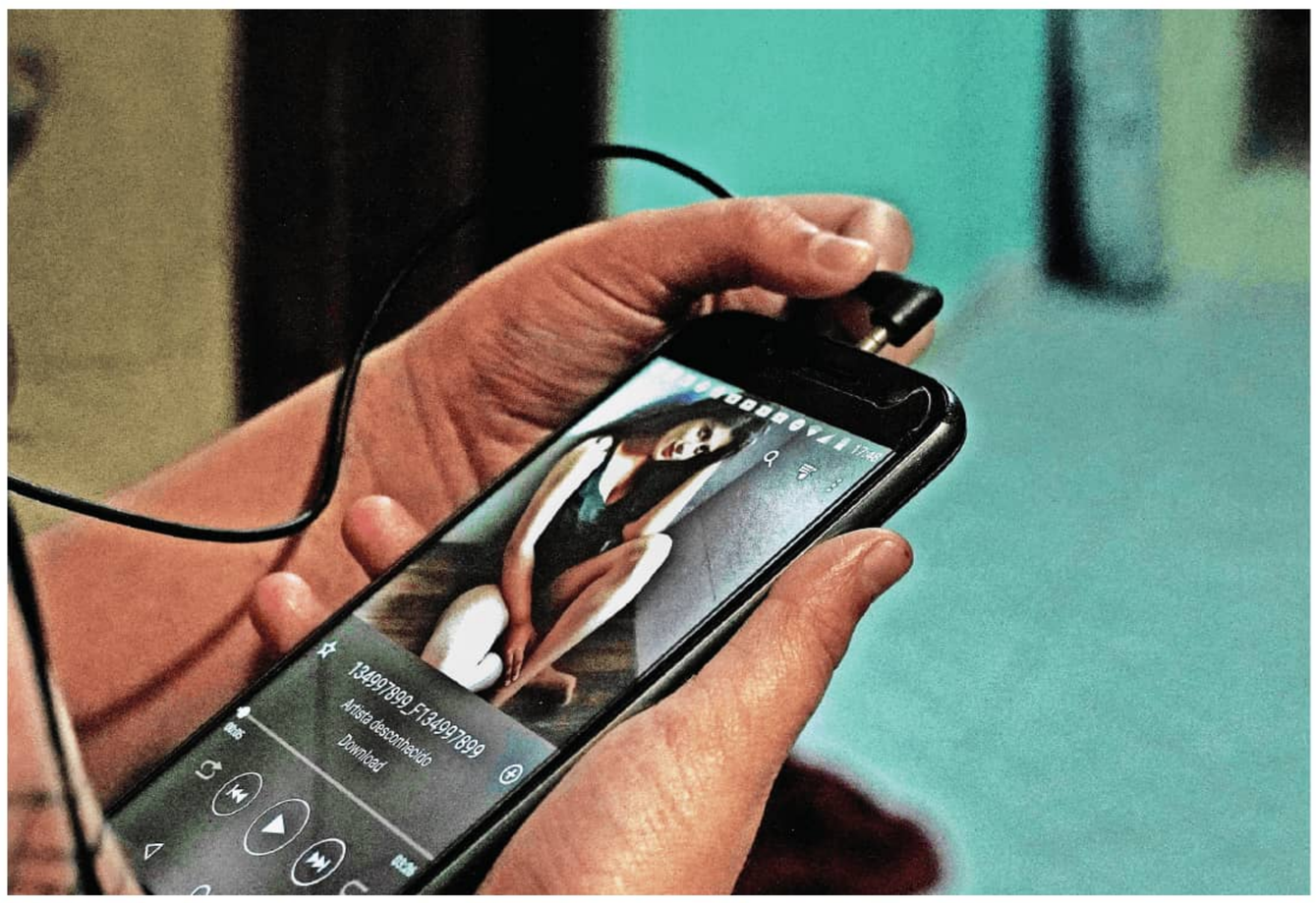
Prabhash Chandra Ray, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden of Karnataka, advocated that safari should be started gradually, as the livelihood of locals has suffered a great deal.–BMB

Crackdown on PG accommodations

The Bengaluru East City Corporation has issued a strict safety directive for all service apartments, hostels, and PG accommodations within its jurisdiction. Commissioner DS Ramesh has directed owners, operators, and managers to inspect their premises and ensure full compliance with all safety regulations, including authorised LPG use, proper ventilation, fire precautions, electrical safety, and valid trade licences. –BMB

MP flags use of AI to sexualise women on social media, writes to IT Minister Vaishnaw

'GROSS MISUSE'



Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi on Thursday wrote to Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw, raising concerns over the alleged misuse of artificial intelligence tools on social media platforms to post objectionable images of women using fake accounts.

She said such practices amount to a serious breach of women's privacy and urged the Centre to take urgent steps to safeguard their rights.

In the letter, Chaturvedi wrote, "I wanted to bring to your urgent attention and urgent intervention on a new trend that has emerged on social media, especially on X, by misusing their AI Grok feature where men are using fake accounts to post women's photos and pushing out prompts to Grok to minimise their clothing and sexualise them. It is not just limited to sharing photos through fake accounts but are also targeting women who post their own photos. This is unacceptable and a gross misuse of an AI function."

She further added, "What is worse is that Grok is enabling this behaviour by adhering to such requests. This is a breach of women's right to privacy as well as unauthorised use of their pictures, which is not just unethical but also criminal."

Priyanka Chaturvedi has further urged the Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology to take decisive action against the social media platform X and to implement safeguards in AI-driven tools to ensure women's safety online.

"Our country cannot be a bystander to women's dignity being violated publicly and digitally with zero consequences under the garb of creativity and innovation condone such prompts.

In a letter, Chaturvedi said India cannot remain a bystander while women's dignity is violated publicly and digitally under the guise of creativity and innovation. She flagged growing concerns over similar unchecked patterns across major tech platforms and stressed that such practices amount to criminal behaviour.

"Our country cannot be a bystander to women's dignity being violated publicly and digitally with zero consequences under the garb of creativity and innovation condone such prompts. We are seeing similar patterns appear even on other big tech platforms that are going absolutely unchecked.

As a nation we must take this up on a priority to ensure women are not the victims of such openly criminal practices and further silence and push them out of these platforms," the letter reads.

Emphasising the need for urgent intervention, she said the government must ensure women are not silenced or pushed out of digital spaces.

Chaturvedi added that while India welcomes artificial intelligence and its benefits, it will not tolerate the spread of demeaning content targeting women and expressed hope that the Ministry would take up the issue with big tech companies. **ANI**

Digital health boom raises environmental alarms

The global consumption of wearable healthcare technology, including blood pressure monitors and ultrasound patches, could increase forty-two-fold by 2050, reaching nearly two billion units annually and emitting 3.4 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, according to a new analysis. The study highlights growing environmental concerns linked to the rapid expansion of digital healthcare devices worldwide.

China is projected to generate the highest annual greenhouse gas emissions from wearable healthcare electronics by 2050, followed by India. The findings were published in the journal Nature.

The analysis also examined environmental impacts beyond emissions, including ecotoxicity and electronic waste generated by these devices.

Researchers explained that carbon dioxide equivalent is a standard unit used to compare climate impacts of different greenhouse gases relative to carbon dioxide.

Scientists from Cornell University and the University of Chicago estimated that a single wearable healthcare device could emit up to six kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent over its entire lifetime, covering raw material extraction, manufacturing, distribution, usage and eventual disposal.

The researchers found that switching to recyclable or biodegradable plastics provides only marginal environmental benefits. In contrast, replacing critical metal conductors and optimising circuit designs can significantly reduce environmental impact without affecting device performance, offering more effective sustainability pathways.

The study introduced an engineering-based framework to assess environmental footprints across the full lifecycle of wearable healthcare electronics.

From glucose monitors to ultrasound patches digital healthcare growth carries environmental costs demanding immediate engineering solutions

The researchers said this framework holds promise for promoting ecologically responsible innovation in next generation wearable devices.

A life cycle assessment was conducted on four representative wearable healthcare devices. These included a non-invasive continuous glucose monitor, a continuous electrocardiogram monitor, a blood pressure monitor, and a point of care ultrasound patch. The devices were chosen based on clinical relevance, diversity of sensing technologies, and representation across different technology readiness levels. **PTI**

BITS & BYTES

MARKET COMEBACK

Shares of Chinese AI chip designer Shanghai Biren Technology jumped 76% in their Hong Kong debut on Friday, marking the financial hub's first listing of 2026.

The stock opened at HK$35.70, hit an intraday high of HK$42.88 and closed at HK$34.46, well above the offer price of HK$19.60. The benchmark Hang Seng Index rose 2.8%. Biren ranked third by turnover, with 150.7 million shares worth HK$5.52 billion changing hands.

The strong debut follows a blockbuster 2025 for Hong Kong equities and signals a wave of AI and semiconductor IPOs as China pushes domestic alternatives amid US export curbs. **ANI**

AI EXPANDS HORIZONS

The year 2026 is likely to see a broadening of the artificial intelligence investment landscape, with smaller companies finding specialised niches to build profitable AI ventures, according to a report by Ambit Wealth.

While AI is widely viewed as a powerful productivity tool, the report notes that many companies have struggled to effectively implement and monetise AI so far. Execution challenges have limited benefits, creating opportunities for IT firms that can help clients successfully leverage AI for productivity gains.

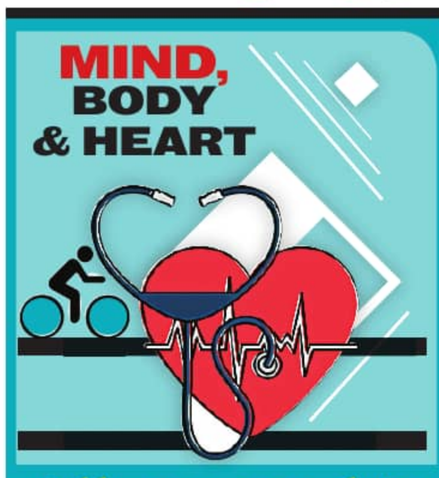
Mid-sized and smaller technology companies are expected to perform well due to their agility and ability to address niche requirements. **ANI**

TECH SELF-RELIANCE

Union Minister for Electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Friday that four companies will begin commercial manufacturing of semiconductor chips in 2026, marking a key milestone in India's push for technology self-reliance.

Micron, CG Power, Kaynes Technology and Tata Electronics are set to start commercial production this year, following pilot runs and strong interest from Taiwan, Japan and South Korea in India's semiconductor ecosystem.

Vaishnaw said firms that began pilot production last year, including CG Power and Kaynes, will transition first. **ANI**



All you need to know about...

Weight gain factors

Hormonal havoc
Improper function of the endocrine system has a major impact on weight gain. Three of the common problems could be hypothyroidism, Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), Cushing's syndrome. When the thyroid glands don't function properly energy burnt is reduced but energy consumed remains constant, leading to weight gain. In PCOS, there is excess rapid accumulation of glucose in the bloodstream, leading to weight gain and in case of Cushing's disease the fat accumulates due to excess cortisol.

Side effects of medicines
A number of medications can lead to excess weight gain. Contraceptive medications lead the list– be it oral or depo-provera shots. Antidepressants, steroids used for asthma, eczema etc could also be sources of hidden weight gain. If you feel that your weight gain is a side effect of any medication you are taking, consult your doc before you make a decision about its usage.

Stress
When in stress, you become an emotional eater and eat sugary foods to comfort yourself or have a carbonated beverage. This is one of the major reasons for weight gain.

Food allergies
Many people are unaware about allergies to certain foods which they might be consuming. According to research, 1 out of 10 people are gaining weight despite best efforts due to food allergies. Some of the common allergens are soy, gluten, lactose, egg, nuts etc which can lead to bloating and even water retention. Take an allergy test, in case you have not been cheating on your exercise and diet!

(Dietician Preethi Rahul, Femina)

Sick leave

Why do I seem to get unwell as soon as I take time off?

You've been hanging out for a break, getting through the busy last weeks of work or class. You're finally ready to relax. And then tiredness descends, you feel the tickle in your throat, and you realise you're getting sick.

Why does this always seem to happen just in time for a holiday or the weekend?

Some call this the let-down effect or leisure sickness.

But is it real? While you may hear about leisure sickness online and anecdotally, studies on this phenomenon are very limited and often not well designed.

So let's take a look at the evidence – and what you can do to stay healthy.

What the evidence shows

Leisure sickness is a term coined by Dutch researchers in a 2002 study. It refers to people who are seldom ill during the working week but get sick relatively often on weekends or holidays.

The researchers surveyed 1,893 people and found roughly 3% reported leisure sickness. Symptoms typically included headaches, tiredness, colds and flu, muscle pain and nausea. People were more likely to develop infections on vacation rather than weekends, and symptoms were most common during the first week of their holiday.

> **Leisure sickness refers to people who are seldom ill during the working week but get sick more often on weekends or holidays**

However, this research relied on people's recall, and memory can be unreliable. The definition of leisure sickness was also vague. For example, one person's idea of "seldom" and "relatively often" may differ from another's.

Another 2014 study investigated "let-down headaches" by asking 22 participants who regularly experienced migraines to keep a diary of their stress levels and migraine onset.

It might seem counter-intuitive, but reducing stress seemed to trigger the migraine. When they recorded a reduction in stress on one day, they typically developed a migraine within the next 24 hours. If work was the stressor, this could mean a pattern of migraines on their days off.

Some evidence suggests strokes are also more common on weekends than weekdays in some groups. There is no clear cause, but the study authors suggested strokes could be triggered by lifestyle changes on weekends.

So, what's going on?

The lack of quality research on leisure sickness means we don't fully understand its potential causes. But there are some theories.

People often travel during vacations, and sit in enclosed, crowded spaces such as planes, increasing their exposure to germs. Travel to distant locations can also expose us to strains of germs we're not immune to.

On holidays we may also drink more alcohol, which can reduce immune function. And we may be pushing our body to do things we don't normally do, putting stress on it.

Another theory is that being busy at work makes us distracted and less likely to pay attention to symptoms. On leave, symptoms such as muscle pain or a headache may become more obvious – and we can't blame it on work. So we may notice sickness more.

But isn't relaxing good for your health?

There is a complicated relationship between stress and the immune system.

Stress activates the sympathetic nervous system and makes our bodies release hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol.

Chronic stress can mean our cortisol levels are sustained at high levels. Over time, this reduces how well our immune cells respond to infection, so we are more likely to get sick if we come into contact with viruses or bacteria.

But in the short term, both adrenaline and cortisol can actually enhance how well some parts of the immune system work. This means acute stress can temporarily improve our resistance to infection, which is why we may feel busy and stressed but not fall sick. Cortisol's anti-inflammatory properties can also relieve pain.

But when the acute stress stops – for example, when we finally get a chance to rest – there may be a sudden transition. We no longer benefit from the temporary immune boost or cortisol's pain relief. So this is when we might fall sick, and feel symptoms such as headaches and muscle pain.

How can I avoid getting sick?

There's still a lot we don't understand about how or why leisure sickness might happen. But we know staying active, getting enough sleep and eating a healthy, balanced diet – even when you're busy – can help boost your immune system.

One Finnish study examined more than 4,000 public employees who were physically inactive. It found those who took up regular exercise, particularly vigorous exercise, were less likely to take sick leave than those who remained inactive.

Given the link between chronic stress and multiple chronic diseases, it is also sensible to manage your workplace-related stress.

There is good evidence that meditation, mindfulness and relaxation techniques can help reduce stress.

There are also steps you can take to reduce the risk of respiratory infections on vacation, so you get to enjoy the whole holiday. Consider keeping up to date with flu and COVID boosters, and taking other precautions, such as wearing an N95 mask on planes and in airports.

(By Thea van de Mortel, Griffith University, The Conversation)

MIRRORLIGHTS

Basis for compulsive behaviours could be inflammation, not 'habit loop'?

Compulsive behaviours may not involve a "habit loop" that overrides self-control, but may instead involve inflammation in a brain region known to be important for choosing actions, according to a study in rats, challenging long-held views. Behaviours in which people repeat a set of actions despite being aware of negative consequences -- such as handwashing or gambling -- are thought to stem from "entrenched habits, so it is difficult for people to break free and take back cognitive control," senior author Laura Bradfield, a behavioural neuroscientist at the University of Technology Sydney in Australia, said.

Ordinarily, habits are useful because they allow us to act on autopilot, such as when we brush our teeth or drive a familiar route, so we can think about other things, Bradfield said.

"However, if we are driving and a child steps onto the road, then we suddenly become aware of our surroundings and focus on what we are doing. This involves taking back conscious control, thinking about possible outcomes and adjusting our behaviour," Bradfield said.

The study, published in the journal Neuropsychopharmacology, looked at rats and tested whether inducing inflammation in the striatum -- brain region responsible for motor control, habit forming and motivation -- would increase habitual behaviour.

The researchers found that the rat's behaviour shifted toward more deliberate, effortful decision-making rather than habit.

"Surprisingly, the animals became more goal-directed and continued to adjust their behaviour based on outcomes, even in situations where habits would normally take over," Bradfield said.

The result was attributed to astrocytes -- star-shaped cells in the brain that support neurons. Inflammation caused these cells to multiply and interfere with nearby groups of neurons that control movement and decision-making, the researchers said.

"Results show that striatal neuroinflammation is sufficient to bias action selection toward excessive goal-directed control via dysregulated astrocyte function," the authors wrote.

They suggested that drugs targeting astrocytes and reducing neuroinflammation, as well as broader anti-inflammatory measures such as exercise or getting better sleep, could offer new avenues for treatment.

-PTI

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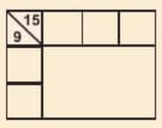
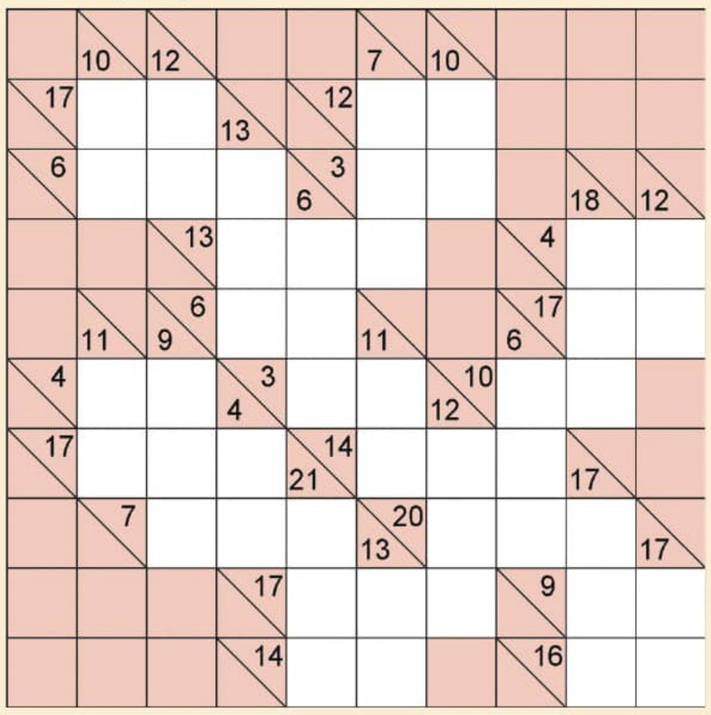
Kakuro

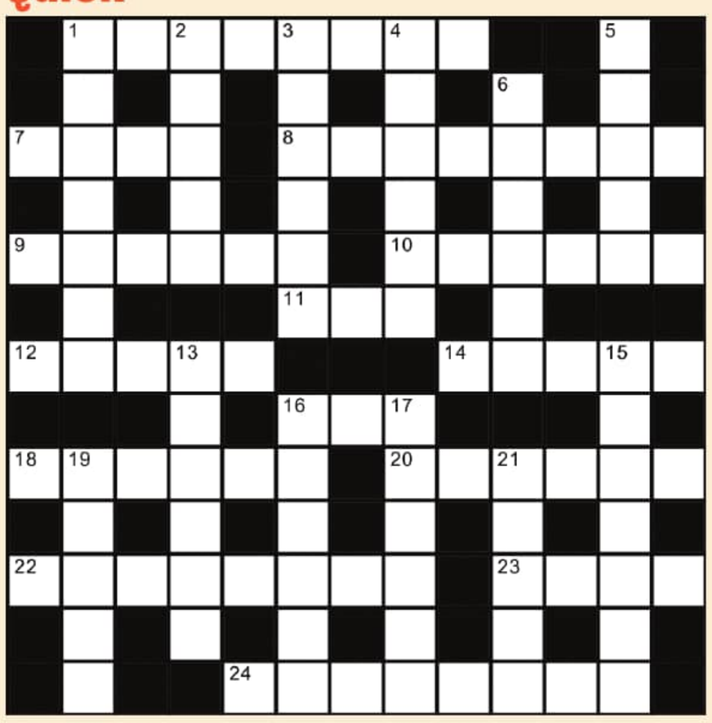
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Most pleased or happiest? (8)
7 Diesel oil, slang (4)
8 France's wine growing region (8)
9 Lacking freshness (6)
10 Proprietors (6)
11 1\100th of a yen (3)
12 Aromatic resin (5)
14 Swings or sways about, in a way? (5)
16 Use a spade (3)
18 More boring? (6)
20 Fosters takes on or embraces (6)
22 All across town (4-4)
23 Oscar winner ___ Stone (4)
24 Nonbeliever (8)

DOWN

1 In a vast quantity or amount? (7)
2 Blacksmith's block (5)
3 Excludes or prohibits the entry (6)
4 Discourse from the pulpit (6)
5 You never said a ___ word : I agree wholeheartedly with your statement? (5)
6 Herb (6)
13 Transmits or broadcasts (6)
15 River of Washington (7)
16 Dehydrating (6)
17 Summerhouse (6)
19 Karnataka town whose name is associated with South Indian food (5)
21 Open and obvious (5)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: Q EQUALS T

V SJKWB THQMGT GUXGW VR QMG YRJSWG.BCG JI SMHQ VD GUXGWWGRQ, QMHR VR QMG GUQGRQ JI OF ZJSGT HRB ZJDDGD.DVJRD.

Linemaro

Did your license get suspended for driving all those girls crazy?

Mindchow

We have to dare to be ourselves, however frightening or strange that self may prove to be

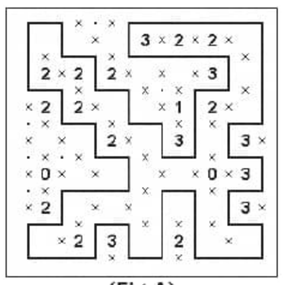
Joke of the day

How do teddy bears keep their den cool in summer? They use bear conditioning

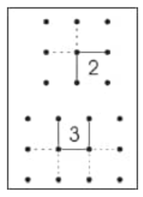
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)

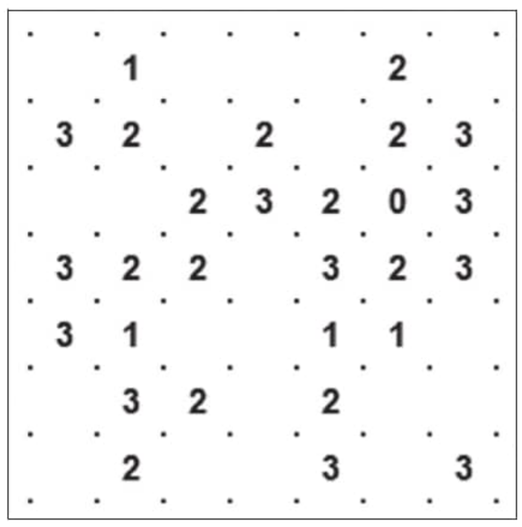


(Fig B) Not Allowed

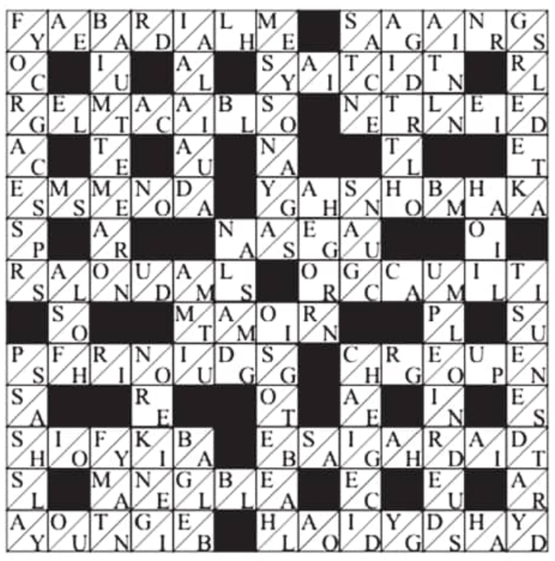
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2 M	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

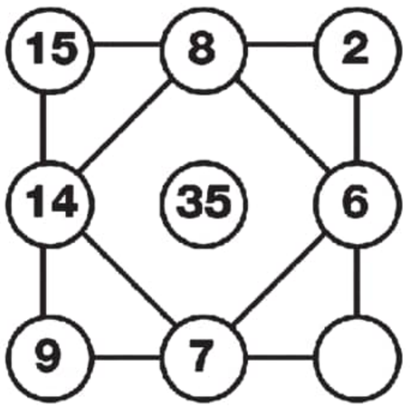
1 Pad me; 6 Overs; 7 Tarot; 8 E duel; 9 Dreed

DOWN

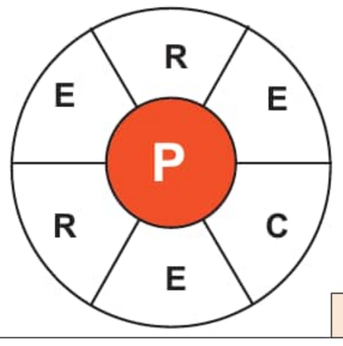
1 Rates; 2 Ler me; 3 Up Rod; 4 Ed Eva; 5 Ted do

Mensapuzzle

Which number logically finishes this puzzle?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

02 Average; **03** Good; **04** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

		3				6		
			4		7			
7		2	3		6	5		1
3	8						1	5
		1				8		
6	4						3	9
9		5	6		3	7		2
			8		9			
		4				3		

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 3

3 3 5 8

Medium = 13

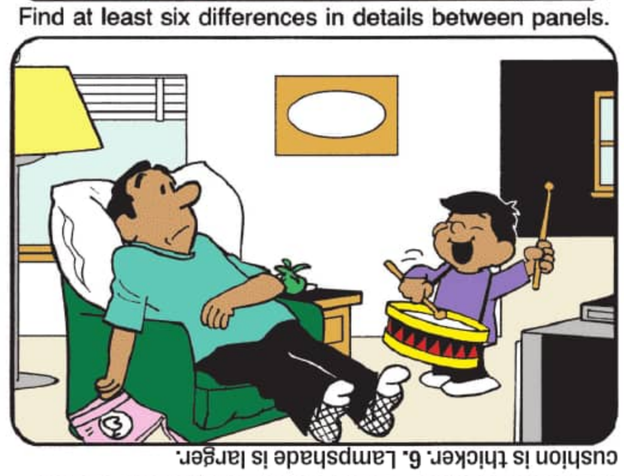
8 5 3 3

Hard = 15

4 5 8 9

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



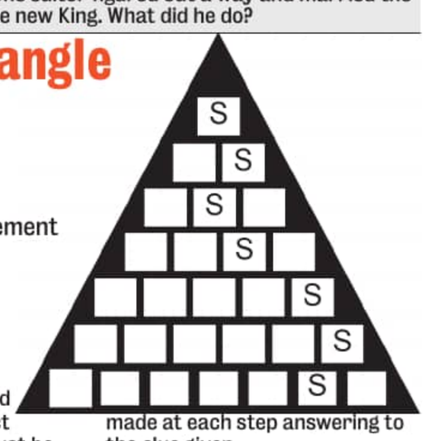
Differences: 1. Drumstick is moved. 2. Man's leg is longer. 3. Blinds are raised. 4. Man's collar is different. 5. Chair cushion is thicker. 6. Lampshade is larger.

Riddler

A wise king devised a contest to see who would receive the Princess' hand in marriage. The Princess was put in a 50 x 50 foot carpeted room. Each of her four suitors were put in one corner of the room with a small box to stand on. The first one to touch the Princess' hand would be the winner and become the new King. The rules were the contestants could not walk over the carpet, cross the plane of the carpet, or hang from anything; nor could they use anything but their body and wits (i.e. no magic, telepathy, nor any items such as ladders, block and tackles etc). One suitor figured out a way and married the Princess and became the new King. What did he do?

Alpha triangle

1 Sulphur symbol
2 Good _ it gets
3 Etna output
4 Fasten at sea
5 Drags
6 Expresses amusement
7 Hungarian stew



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

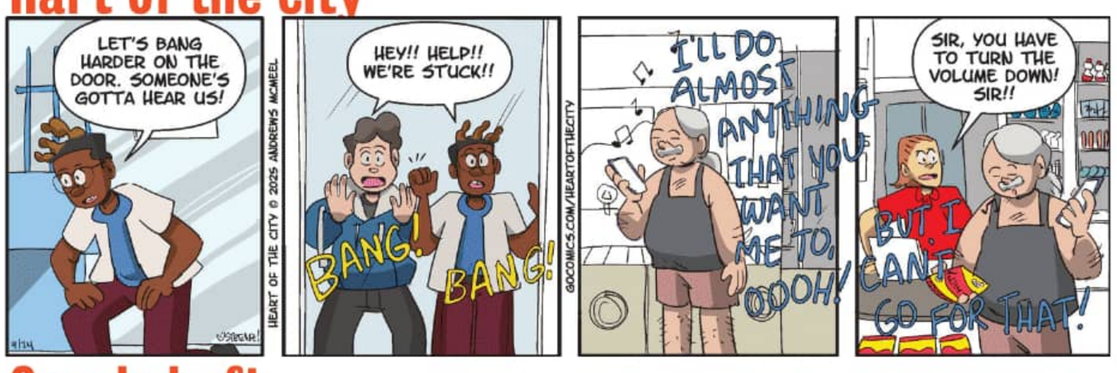
Popeye

HOW IS YA GO'NER GIT TO YER KING?
HIS KINGDOM IS AN ISLAND, SO I'LL HAVE TO GO TO HIM BY SHIP!
YEAH! BUT HE AIN'T GOT NO SHIP TO SEND FER YA!
ISN'T IT LUCKY I KNOW A SWEET, COOPERATIVE SAILOR WHO OWNS A SHIP!!
?
?
BUD SAGENDORF
4-4
popeye.com

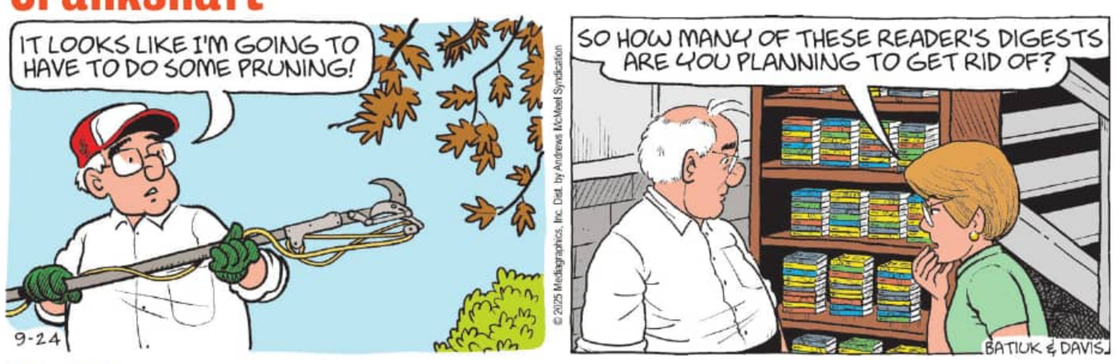
Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

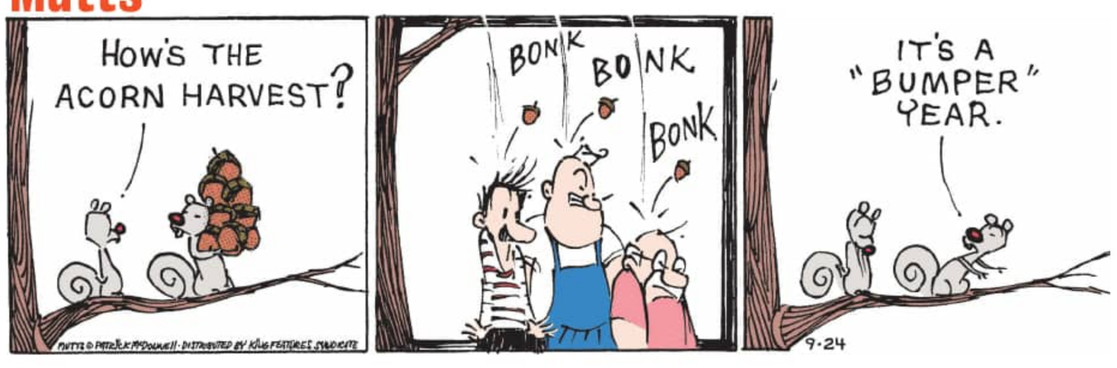
Hart of the city


LET'S BANG HARDER ON THE DOOR. SOMEONE'S GOTTA HEAR US!
HEY!! HELP!! WE'RE STUCK!!
BANG!
BANG!
I'LL DO ALMOST ANYTHING THAT YOU WANT ME TO, OOOH!
SIR, YOU HAVE TO TURN THE VOLUME DOWN! SIR!!
BUT I CAN'T GO FOR THAT!
HEART OF THE CITY © 2025 ANDREWS MCMEEL
@OCOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Crankshaft


IT LOOKS LIKE I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DO SOME PRUNING!
SO HOW MANY OF THESE READER'S DIGESTS ARE YOU PLANNING TO GET RID OF?
9-24
© 2025 Mediagraphics, Inc. Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication
BATIUK & DAVIS

Mutts



WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

Get ready for a year of inspiring mental and spiritual expansion. Opportunities for travel and higher learning will broaden your perspective significantly. Embrace creative projects and open communication to deepen your relationships. Share your unique wisdom and optimistic outlook; your words will be a source of motivation for many others.

Aries Mar 21–Apr 20

You already possess the knowledge to easily navigate, challenges ahead. Hit the accelerator and move forward with an open, brave heart now. Expect any travel plans that were delayed to quickly sort themselves out.

Taurus Apr 21–May 20

Focus on serving with deep, unconditional love and inspiring great change. Does your current path truly satisfy your soul and align with your vision? You are here to lay the foundation for a beautiful new reality.

Gemini May 21–Jun 21

A promising offer accelerates your growth, but negotiate terms carefully for maximum support. Read the details fully. Focus on 'expansion' as your main intention for the year.

Cancer Jun 22–July 23

You have clear vision; now hold space for open conversation with co-creators. Solopreneurs, consistency is your key power word this year . Showing up for your mission will be your greatest triumph. Communicate honestly to succeed.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

You will power through breakdowns that lead directly to major breakthroughs. Fill your cup with joy and fulfilment today. Engage in activities like swimming or frolicking. The Universe desires only the very best for you.

Virgo Aug 24–Sep 23

Take a holistic approach to your well-being, and remember healing starts within. Set time aside for silence and mindful meditation. The external noise will fade, allowing your inner guide to speak clearly now.

Libra Sep 24–Oct 22

Stop dimming your sparkle; the truth demands you walk your unique path fearlessly. The world is your oyster, waiting for you to discover it. Venture boldly into the beautiful unknown. You are tired of living others' dreams.

Scorpio Oct 23–Nov 22

This moment is the ultimate gift; promise yourself to live more joyfully and mindfully. Look through the eyes of awareness at everything presented. Honouring life's lessons expands your consciousness.

Sagittarius Nov 23–Dec 22

Positive poetic justice is on the horizon for legal issues soon. Invoke support as you visualise the best possible outcome now. Spending time with loved ones balances your climb to the top.

Capricorn Dec 23–Jan 20

Embrace the spark. If you feel it, approach them in your unique, confident way. For losses, observe your feelings without judgement. Remember this emotional process is temporary. Take your chances, this too shall pass.

Aquarius Jan 21–Feb 19

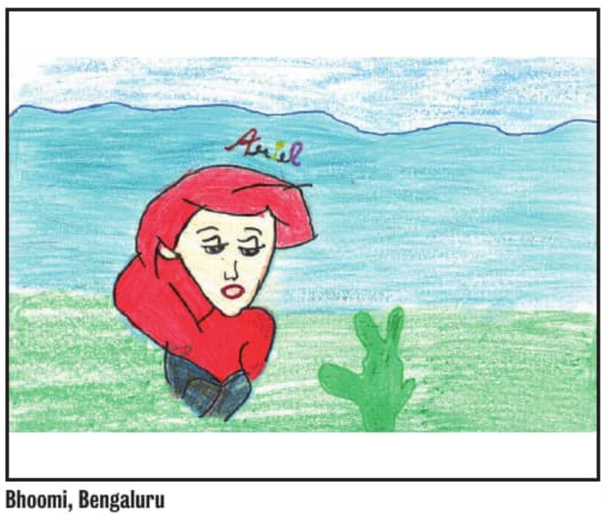
You need to recharge, so immediately step outside and connect with the earth. Feel the wind, touch the grass, and practise grounding rituals. Thank Mother Earth for her abundant support. Nature is your best medicine.

Pisces Feb 20–Mar 20

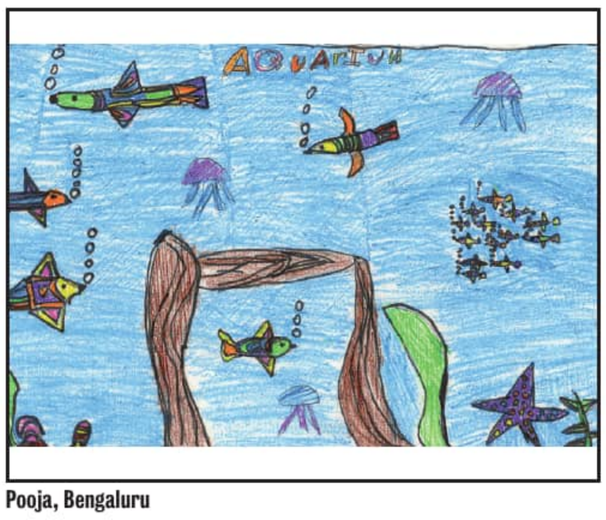
Kindness and simple, generous words affirm love to those – in your life. Grand declarations are less important than small, heartfelt gestures. Your compassion has a magical ability to heal broken hearts. Express your affection now.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE



Bhoomi, Bengaluru



Pooja, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M

[(1/4)^-2 ÷ (3/8) – (1/10)] = 9. The four corners
[(4/1)^2 ÷ (3/8) – (1/10)] = add up to 35, as do
[16 x (3/8) – (1/10)] = the four centre
[6 – (1/10)] = figures on each side
[59 / 10)] = 5.9 of the square.

BULL'S EYE

creep,
CREEPER,
crepe, peer

STRIKE OUT

F	E	B	R	I	L	E	■	A	G	I	N	G	■	■
O	■	I	■	L	■	S	T	I	N	■	R	■	■	■
C	■	T	■	A	■	L	S	■	E	R	N	I	E	■
R	E	T	A	I	L	■	■	T	■	E	■	■	■	■
E	M	E	N	D	■	Y	A	S	H	M	A	K	■	■
■	P	R	■	A	S	E	A	■	I	■	■	■	■	■
S	A	N	D	A	L	■	O	C	C	U	L	T	■	■
S	■	■	M	A	I	N	■	P	■	■	■	U	■	■
S	H	R	O	U	D	S	■	C	R	E	P	E	■	■
A	■	■	R	■	O	■	A	■	N	■	■	S	■	■
S	O	F	I	A	■	B	A	G	H	D	A	D	■	■
S	■	A	N	G	L	E	■	E	■	E	■	A	■	■
O	N	G	E	■	L	A	D	Y	D	A	Y	■	■	■

FAST FIVE

A	M	P	E	D
S	E	R	V	O
T	R	O	A	T
E	L	U	D	E
R	E	D	E	D

RIDDLER

Asked the princess to touch his hand.

QUICK

■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	I
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	P	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	S	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	T	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	F	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	F	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	F	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	E	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	F	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	E	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
F	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

MENSA PUZZLE

9. The four corners add up to 35, as do the four centre figures on each side of the square.

QUOTE UNCODE

I would rather excel in the knowledge of what is excellent, than in the extent of my power and possessions.

SUDOKU

8	7	4	1	2	5	3	9	6
2	3	6	8	7	9	1	5	4
9	1	5	6	4	3	7	8	2
6	4	7	5	1	8	2	3	9
5	2	1	9	3	4	8	6	7
3	8	9	7	6	2	4	1	5
7	9	2	3	8	6	5	4	1
1	6	8	4	5	7	9	2	3
4	5	3	2	9	1	6	7	8

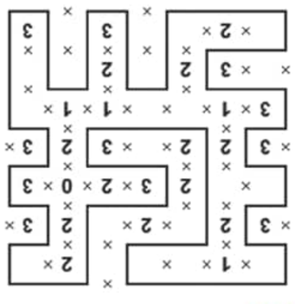
ALPHA TRIANGLE

S, As, Ash,
Lash, Hauls,
Laughs,
Goulash.

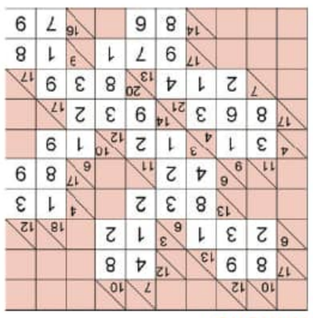
GO FIGURE

3 + 8 – 3 – 5 = 3
Easy
3 + 8 + 5 – 3 = 13
Medium
4 – 9 + 8 x 5 = 15
Hard

LOOP



KAKURO



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In poor light
Ashley Judd says depiction of women in 'Heat' "is not okay," calls film a reflection of reality

Epic move

Akshaye ventures into Tollywood

After making headlines for his controversial exit from Drishyam 3, Akshaye Khanna has now shifted focus to his upcoming mythological epic Mahakali. The actor, who is currently riding high on the success of his spy actioner Dhurandhar, has joined the sets of the film, marking his official Telugu debut.

Mahakali stars Bhoomi Shetty in the lead role as Maha and is positioned as a key installment in the Prashanth Varma Cinematic Universe (PVCU). Last September, filmmaker Prashanth Varma had unveiled Akshaye's first-look poster from the film, revealing him as Shukracharya, a pivotal character in the mythological narrative.

The latest update came through director Puja Kolluru, who recently shared a year-end post on Instagram featuring a selfie with Akshaye Khanna from the film's sets. The post effectively confirmed that filming is underway with the actor on board.

Touted as Tollywood's first female superhero film, Mahakali is being positioned as a large-scale, genre-defining project and is scheduled for an early 2026 theatrical release. While Akshaye's professional slate continues to expand, his sudden exit from Drishyam 3 has sparked intense debate within the industry.

Producer Kumar Mangat Pathak of Panorama Studios publicly accused the actor of walking out just days before the film was set to go on floors.

Speaking to Bollywood Hungama, Pathak alleged that Akshaye's recent success had impacted his conduct.

"Success has gone to Akshaye Khanna's head," he said, adding that a legal notice was sent to the actor following his exit.

–ETimes

No doubles: Actor Timothee Chalamet refused a butt double in his film 'Marty Supreme'. In the film, a scene sees his character being spanked by Kevin O'Leary's pen entrepreneur Milton Rockwell. Kevin told 'Variety', "He said he'll do it himself. He didn't want some other a** immortalised".

Ties that bind

THEERTHAROOPA TANDEYAVARIGE
3.5 RATING ★★★½
- **DIRECTOR** Ramenahalli Jagannatha
- **ACTORS** Nihar Mukesh, Rachana Inder, Sithara, Ravindra Vijay, Rajesh Nataranga, Ajith Hande, Ashwitha R Hegde, and Girish Shivanna.
- **Duration** 149 minutes
- **Certification** UA

Director Ramenahalli Jagannatha, known as one of the intellectual script writers, makes a comeback with Theertharoopa Tandeyavarige. Jagannatha earned fame for Hondisi Bariyeri three years ago. Jagannatha's specialty is his ability to write scripts that connect to audiences who go home content after watching his movies at theaters. Theertharoopa Tandeyavarige highlights the importance and value of the bond between parents and children and also attempts to educate media persons to be responsible while reporting news. It mirrors how a few over enthusiastic journalists sensationalise news without bothering how such news ruins the lives of hapless people. Its plot revolves around a tabloid editor, who misuses information given by a victim, expecting the much-needed advice, protection and justice, and how a reporter's casual reporting on a road accident devastate a physics professor.

The director relies on the script and selects an apt cast. He also makes the actors get into the skin of characters. Some scenes like where Rachana Inder is compelled to clean a child's bottom and the conversation between two grand-mothers are a bit misplaced.

The movie begins with Ravi Ramanathapura (Ajith Hande), a tabloid editor from Bengaluru, visiting a police station in Mysuru to enquire about the progress of a missing case pertaining to Prof. Shivashankar (Ravindra Vijay). At this juncture, the scene shifts to Mudigere to narrate the story of Pruthvi Sanchari (Nihar Mukesh), a travel vlogger. He is seen spending most of the time in travel rather than at home. He avoids his mother Janaki (Sithara). Based on rumours and nasty comments of neighbours, he misunderstands his mother's closeness to Vishwanath (Rajesh Nataranga).

Meanwhile, Akshara (Rachana Inder), the daughter of editor Ravi Ramanathapura, helps Pruthvi Sanchari in a school project and falls in love with him. Pruthvi Sanchari comes to know that her father is responsible for all his problems. You have to watch the movie to know what happens to Pruthvi and Akshara.

Nihar Mukesh, who makes debut as a hero, has excelled with his gestures and dialogue delivery. Rachana Inder, as usual, is at her best. Sithara, Rajesh Nataranga, Ajith Hande are good support. Ravindra Vijay walks away with all honours for his sterling performance as a father who goes to any extent to save his daughter.

Joe Costa's music adds value to the movie while cinematographer Deepak Yaragera has done an excellent job in capturing beautiful locations not only in Karnataka but also Cherrapunji and other locations in Meghalaya.

It is a must watch for family audiences to know the importance of love.

-Y Maheswara Reddy